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INSIDE THIS WEEK...

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Season 4: Issue 6 Monday 17th March 2008

VICTORY POSTER

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ON BRANDON VASSALLO**

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EAGLES' RICHIE CARDOZO**

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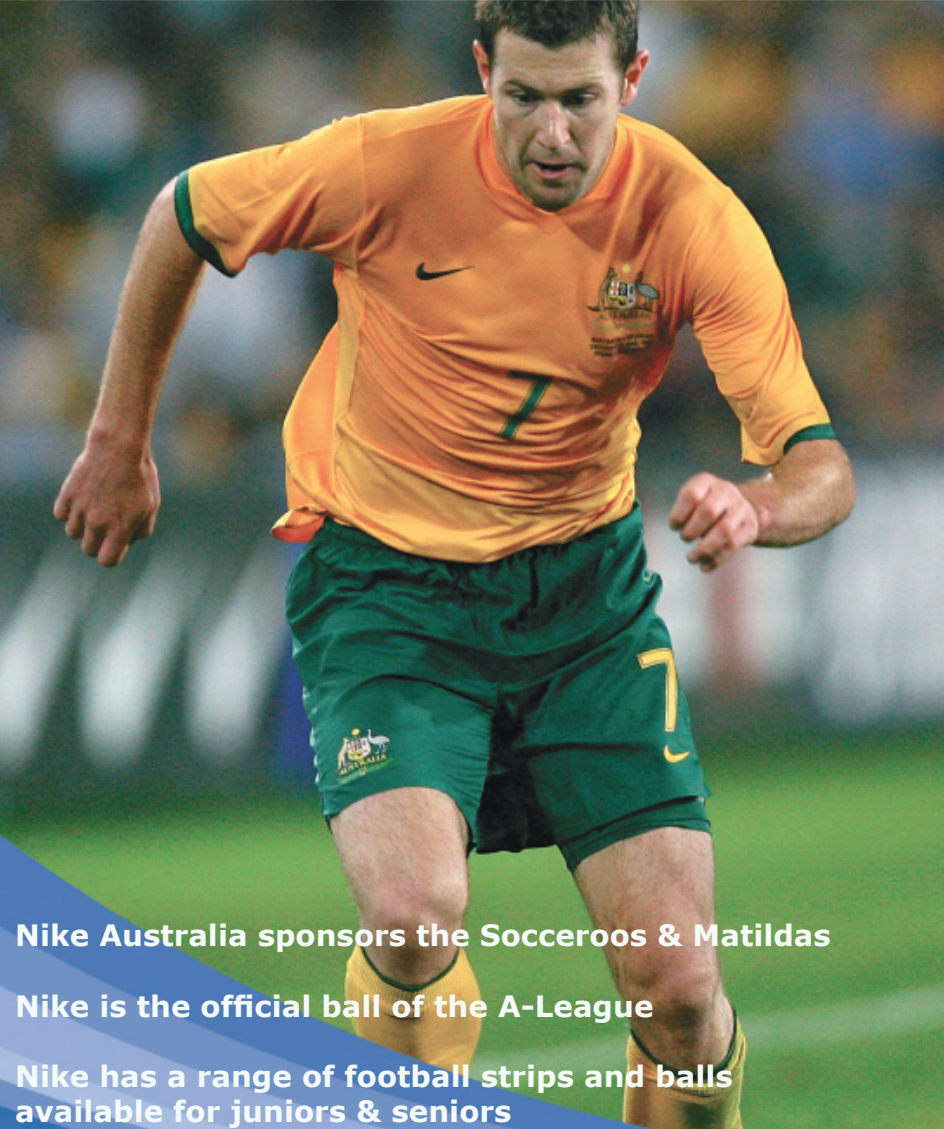
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MELBOURNE VICTORY



Photo: Daniel Flis

The Victory lines up prior to its inaugural AFL clash against Korea's Chunnam Dragons at Telstra Dome last Wednesday night. A crowd of 23,656 cheered the home side to a 2-0 win. Kevin Muscat and Rodrigo Vargas were the scorers.
Back row: Billy Celeski, Danny Allsupp, Roddy Vargas, Michael Theaklitos, Nick Ward, Adrian Gaceras.
Front row: Archie Thompson, Leigh Broxham, Matthew Kemp, Kevin Muscat (C), Steve Pantelidis.

MELBOURNE Victory FC

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SOCCEROO SQUAD NAMED

Verbeek keeps options open

This week's line-up

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News Room: (03) 9645-1440
Advertising: (03) 9645-1440

news@goalweekly.com
mailbag@goalweekly.com
www.goalweekly.com

Editor: Costa Koutropoulos
Art Director: Carlos Ibarra
Production: Gagandeep Singh, MJ Ali.

Contributors:

Nat Adamopoulos, Mark Boric, Richard Bartolo,
Adrian Ceddia, Bruce Darnell, George Egonidis,
Andrew Fisher, Jason Gillick, Steven Gray,
Roy Hay, Markian Jaworsky, Paul Jefferies,
George Katsamboukas, Eddie Krncevic,
John Kyrou, Sebastian Kipman,
George Kouroumalis, Michael Lilikakis,
Josip Loncaric, Craig MacKenzie,
Joe Novella, Jeremy O'Neil, Teo Pellizzeri,
Chris Priftis, Walter Pless, Julius Ross,
Mike Salter, George Stogiannou,
Reuben Schembri, Richard Sucksmith,
Lachlan Taylor, Nick Townsend, Elias Simopoulos,
Michal Skrodsky, Addy Wetzler, Bruno Zovko,

Photographers:

Daniel Flis, Darryl Kennedy,
John Punshon, Steve Starek,
Therese Duffy, George Stogiannou.

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Qantas Socceroos coach Pim Verbeek has once again kept his options open while naming his squad for the vital 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifier to be played against China in Kunming on 26 March.

A squad of 21 players was announced but Verbeek has indicated that not all of those players were guaranteed to be called up and some others may also be added.

"We have placed a large group of players on notice that they could be called up for the match," said Verbeek.

"Some of those players may not end up being included in the final squad and also players from the team that play against Singapore could also be added."

"With the short time difference between playing for the clubs in Europe and the match we need to have options open for us if players become unavailable due to injury."

Earlier this week the squad to play Singapore at their National Stadium four days before the qualifier against China was selected and featured all Hyundai A-League players. An impressive performance in that match could see those players added to squad to travel to Kunming.

Australia got off to a great start to their 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign with a 3-0 home win against Qatar last month but Verbeek knows this will be a tougher challenge.

"China will be desperate to win because they had a draw in their first match."

"It is vital to win your matches at home and China know this which is why they have been preparing themselves in Kunming since 1 March."

The squad will be finalised following Australia's international match against Singapore at their National Stadium on Saturday 22 March.

The matches against China and Singapore will be shown live and exclusive on FOX SPORTS.

MATCH DETAILS

2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier
China v Australia
Wednesday 26 March 2008
Tuodong Stadium, Kunming

PROVISIONAL SOCCEROOS SQUAD

Michael Beauchamp (Nuremburg, Germany), **Mark Bresciano** (Palermo, Italy), **Jacob Burns** (Unirea Valahorum, Romania), **Tim Cahill** (Everton, England), **Nick Carle** (Bristol City, England), **David Carney** (Sheffield United, England), **Jason Culina** (PSV Eindhoven, Netherlands), **Brett Emerton** (Blackburn, England), **Adam Federici** (Reading, England), **Vincenzo Grella** (Torino, Italy), **Brett Holman** (NEC Nijmegen, Netherlands), **Josh Kennedy** (Karlsruhe, Germany), **Harry Kewell** (Liverpool, England), **Patrick Kisnorbo** (Leicester City, England),

Scott McDonald (Celtic, Scotland), **Lucas Neill** (West Ham, England), **Mark Schwarzer** (Middlesbrough, England), **Mile Sterjovski** (Derby County, England), **James Troisi** (Newcastle, England), **Carl Valeri** (Grosseto, Italy), **Luke Wilshire** (Twente, Netherlands).



Socceroo coach Pim Verbeek isn't prepared to show his hand just yet when announcing the final squad for the tricky World Cup qualifier against China later this month.



KEWELL'S POOL OF TEARS?

Harry's Liverpool future in doubt

Harry Kewell has been told by Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez that he faces an uphill battle to land a new contract at Anfield.

Australia international Kewell, 29, becomes a free agent at the end of the current Premier League season and no talks have yet taken place to discuss new terms that would keep the former Leeds United forward on Merseyside.

The injury-ravaged star has made just 93 league appearances for Liverpool since arriving from Leeds in July 2003 for 5 million pounds (10 million US dollars) and has so far only been able to muster 15 appearances in all competitions this season.

His failure to secure a regular place in Benitez's team has prompted Kewell to seek permission from the Spaniard to link up with Pim Verbeek's Socceroos squad for next week's training camp in Singapore ahead of the World Cup qualifier against China in Kunming on March 26.

And after giving Kewell the green light to jet out to the Far East just days before

Liverpool face bitter rivals Manchester United at Old Trafford in the Premier League, Benitez said the Socceroo's prospects of earning a new deal at Anfield were not healthy.

"Harry will go with Australia because he is not playing in the team at Liverpool at the moment and I have one or two other options for his position," Benitez explained.

"It is better for him that he goes because sometimes it can be positive for players to play for their national team, especially if they have not been playing many games.

"It is more difficult for Harry to get a contract now, but if he plays well when he comes back, then we can decide at the end of the season."

Liverpool, who have been drawn against Premier League leaders Arsenal, whom they trail by 10 points in the table, in the Champions League quarter-finals, were at home to relegation-threatened Reading on Saturday.



Liverpool's Australian Harry Kewell, seen here in January 2008, has been told by Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez that he faces an uphill battle to land a new contract at Anfield.

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Scoreboard

FOXTEL CUP STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Richmond Eagles	5	3	2	0	15	4	11
Melbourne Knights	5	3	2	0	10	4	11
Oakleigh Cannons	5	3	2	0	5	2	11
A.I.S	4	3	1	0	11	5	10
Altona Magic	5	2	3	0	7	4	9
Preston Lions	5	2	2	1	9	9	8
Green Gully Cavaliers	5	2	2	1	4	4	8
Coburg Utd	5	2	1	2	8	8	7
Heidelberg Utd	5	1	3	1	6	6	6
South Melbourne	4	1	0	3	7	5	3
Western Suburbs	5	1	0	4	1	11	3
Frankston Pines	5	0	1	4	4	9	1
Whittlesea Zebras*	4	0	1	3	3	9	1
Fawkner Blues*	4	0	0	4	2	12	0

RESULTS

Oakleigh Cannons	1 - 0	Western Suburbs
Richmond Eagles	1 - 1	Altona Magic
Frankston Pines	0 - 2	Melbourne Knights
Coburg United	1 - 4	Preston Lions
Heidelberg United	2 - 2	Green Gully Cavaliers
Whittlesea Zebras	Playing tonight* Fawkner Blues	

UNDER 21 DETAILS

Richmond 2 Altona Magic 1, Oakleigh Cannons 1 Western Suburbs 1, Coburg Utd 0
Preston Lions 1, Frankston Pines 2 Melbourne Knights 0, Heidelberg Utd 0 Green Gully
Cavaliers 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Richmond	5	5	0	0	18	5	15
Green Gully Cavaliers	5	4	0	1	11	2	12
Coburg Utd	5	3	0	2	7	5	9
Melbourne Knights	5	2	1	2	6	11	7
Oakleigh Cannons	5	1	3	1	6	4	6
Preston Lions	5	2	0	3	5	8	6
South Melbourne	4	1	2	1	5	5	5
V.I.S	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Frankston Pines	5	1	2	2	3	7	5
Whittlesea Zebras	4	1	1	2	5	6	4
Heidelberg Utd	5	1	1	3	8	12	4
Altona Magic	5	1	0	4	5	8	3
* Fawkner Blues	4	1	1	1	2	4	1
* Western Suburbs	5	1	1	2	3	6	1

*Deducted 3 pts.

THE TOP MARKSMEN

Player, Club	Goals
Curcija, Michael Altona Magic SC	6
Naidovski, Jason A.I.S	6
Cardozo, Pablo Richmond SC	5
Catalano, Michael Richmond SC	4
Josifovski, Alexander Coburg United FC	4
Cardozo, Richard Richmond SC	3
Danning, Kofi D A.I.S	3
De Moraes, Fernando South Melbourne FC	3
Gasparis, Marino D Preston Lions SC	3
Sterjovski, Tony Preston Lions SC	3



UPCOMING FIXTURES

ROUND 10
Fawkner Blues v
Oakleigh Cannons
CB Smith Reserve
Mon 24 Mar KO 3:00PM

ROUND 5
South Melbourne v
A.I.S
Bob Jane Stadium
Mon 24 Mar KO 4:00PM

ROUND 6
A.I.S v
Oakleigh Cannons
To Be Confirmed
Sat 29 Mar

Altona Magic v
Whittlesea Zebras
Paisley Park
Sat 29 Mar KO 7:30PM

Fawkner Blues v
Frankston Pines
CB Smith Reserve
Sun 30 Mar KO 3:00PM

Preston Lions v
South Melbourne
BT Connor Reserve
Sun 30 Mar KO 3:00PM

Western Suburbs v
Richmond
Ralph Reserve
Sun 30 Mar KO 3:00PM

Green Gully Cavaliers
v Coburg Utd
Green Gully Reserve
Sun 30 Mar KO 5:00PM

Melbourne Knights v
Heidelberg Utd
Knights Stadium
Sun 30 Mar KO 6:00PM



COBURG
UNITED

1 - 4

PRESTON
LIONS

AWESOME FOURSOME

Lions rattle ten man Coburg

The Preston Lions got their championship defence back on track with a 4 -1 victory over a ten men Coburg United at Knights Stadium.

A second half double to Marino Gasparis, plus goals to John Sapazovski and Tony Sterjovski were enough to defeat a gallant Coburg outfit that played the entire second half a man down due to Ross Thompson being sent off moments before half time.

Ironically, it was the villain Thompson, who nearly turned hero for Coburg in the game's opening passage of play. Thompson latched onto a ball thirty yards from the Preston goal and the strike beat Lions keeper Lupce Acevski, but not the woodwork. Coburg should have opened their account in the third minute when an Anthony Magnacca free kick found Brett Gilmour on the six yard box, only for Gilmour to send his free header over the bar.

Contrary to Coburg's explosive start, Preston created their best chance on the half hour

mark, when Sterjovski delivered a superb ball through midfield to split Coburg's defence and present Sapazovski an open shot on goal from six yards. Sapazovski's resulting shot was saved by United's keeper Adam Herosin, instinctively using his feet to clear the attack.

Coburg nearly clinched the lead moments later when Alexander Josifovski's cross was agonisingly close to connecting to an unmarked Andy Vlahos on the far post. However, their momentum was derailed in the fortieth minute when Thompson collected two yellow cards in the space of minutes. Although square on the scoreboard at half time, the advantage rested with Preston and the Lions fully capitalised on the situation in the sixtieth minute, with Sterjovski making a run along the left wing and firing in a cross which Sapazovski finished on his right boot in the middle of the six yard box.

Preston's lead was cancelled within the space of minutes, when former Lion Anthony Magnacca weaved his magic through

midfield to combine with Brett Gilmour and set up Andrew Vlahos inside the box that by-passed Acevski with a low strike from twelve yards.

In the seventieth minute, Coburg again trailed when Lions midfielder Ricky Chillico was fouled in the Coburg box. Match referee Senko Rastocic had no hesitation in awarding a penalty which Sterjovski duly converted on the spot, although Herosin did get a touch on the powerfully struck ball.

Preston soon had a two goal cushion over Coburg when Sterjovski again broke free along the left flank and this time his cross was finished by Marino Gasparis from close range on the back post. Minutes later, Coburg came close to pegging a goal back when Vlahos's cross gave new substitute Nicholas Harrhy a free header which sailed over the bar. Preston punished Coburg's inability to finish their chances and sealed all three points when defender Les Anastasiou delivered a perfectly weighted long ball along the right flank to find a solo Gasparis

upfront. Gasparis finished the play with a cracking half volley from the edge of the right hand side of the box, to defy Herosin on the near post and register his second goal in style for the evening.

Finishing 4-1 winners and running over a defiant ten men Coburg, Preston produced their best result for the season thus far, with their second half performance showing glimpses of their championship form which had deserted them in previous rounds. Coburg coach Joe Montemurro was unavailable for comment, but his Preston counterpart Goran Lozanovski was naturally happy with the result, stating "I was happy to take a 1-0 win when we hit the lead. However, when Coburg pinched a goal back, I thought they started to look more dangerous than us and the pleasing things for me out of this match are we stepped up again when the pressure was on, took the game to another level and scored four goals, a first for us this season."

Match Details:

Coburg: A. Herosin, P. Tigy (D. Rocco 70'), S. Pir, A. Josifovski, A. Vlahos, R. Thompson, A. Magnacca, B. Gilmour, E. Garcia (N. Harrhy 65'), S. Kovacevic (A. Gurpinhar 75'), M. Mustafa(c).

Scorers: A. Vlahos (62').

Yellow cards: S. Kovacevic 32', R. Thompson 40', 41', B. Gilmour 43', A. Vlahos 73'

Red cards: R. Thompson 41'

Preston: L. Acevski, S. Masalkovski, L. Anastasiou, V. Pittito, F. Catalano (R. Chillico 65'), M. Miskas (N. Schwal 10'), M. Gasparis, T. Sterjovski, B. Georgioski (W. Spiteri 70'), I. Kolevski, J. Sapazovski.

Scorers: J. Sapazovski (60'), T. Sterjovski (70'), M. Gasparis (77', 85').

Yellow Cards: B. Georgioski 50', J. Sapazovski 60', T. Sterjovski 85'

Red Cards: None

Man of the Match:
Marino Gasparis
(Preston Lions)

Crowd: 1000
Venue: Knights Stadium



The sky's the limit! Tony Sterjovski puts the Lions ahead for the second time in the match against Coburg after converting a penalty and notching his third goal of the season. **Bottom of the ladder after Round One, the Lions haven't lost since and are now knocking on the door of the Top Six.**

By Simon McCuskey

Photos by Nome Risteski

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FRANKSTON
PINES

0 - 2



MELBOURNE
KNIGHTS

KNIGHTS CHOP DOWN PINES

Pines no match as Knights impress

Goals either side of half-time secured a vital 2-0 for the Melbourne Knights against the Frankston Pines, in sweltering conditions at Monterey Reserve.

The Knights made one change to the team that defeated the Zebra's, with match winner Dario Matkovic coming in for the injured Cameron Watson. While the Pine welcomed back captain Cameron Leopold.

The away side started brightly and created their first chance within 15 seconds, as Spiteri found space down the left, however his shot was well blocked. The height of Esala Masi and Nicholas Waite was the biggest threat from the Pines, in the 5th minute Masi laid off his header for Leopold who flashed his shot wide.

Matkovic had a chance to repeat his heroics of last week, when some slick passing moves from the Knights found the winger on the left, but his run and shot smashed into the side netting. The hot weather and poor state of the pitch resulted in a scrappy affair, Knights captain Milardovic fell victim to the pitch when an awkward fall forced him off the in the 25th minute.

The Knights began to take a strangle

hold of the match, a good cross from Pelikan just missed the head of a diving Franjic. However the away side did take the lead right on the stroke of half time. Petrevski found some space on the left wing, cut his run into the box and found Matkovic, who laid it off for Timmonds to turn and poke the ball into the bottom of the corner from just inside the box.

Frankston found themselves in trouble early in the second half, as some poor defending allowed Kiratzoglou to lay off a pass to the unmarked Spiteri, who finished superbly to make it 2-0 in the 52nd minute, and effectively kill off any chance of a Frankston fight back.

The home side lacked creativity going forward and consistently played the long ball, looking for the tall men up front. As the Knights looked comfortable sitting back and hitting the Pines on the break. The best chance for the Pine came in the 56th minute when a snap shot from Masi was easily saved by Ozdemir. This would be Frankston's only shot on target for the game.

Chances to extend the lead came and went for the Knights, with the most notable a Petrevski one-on-one with the keeper, which

just went wide of the post and a reflex save from Roganovic to deny Pelikan.

The win moves the Knights level on points with leaders Richmond, as they welcome Heidelberg to Knights Stadium after Easter, and the Pines must improve if they are to salvage anything this season, they face Fawkner at CB Smith Reserve in a fortnight.

MATCH STATS

Shots: Frankston 5 Knights 18

On Target: Frankston 1 Knights 6

Corners: Frankston 4 Knights 5

Crowd: 400 @ Monterey Reserve.

FRANKSTON LINE UP: Roganovic, Duckworth, Malcolm, Trebbia, Smart, Masi, Leopold, Waite, Black, Ovcin, Jones

Cautions: Trebbia (47')

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS LINE UP: Ozdemir, Iosifidis, Milardovic (Kiratzoglou 25'), Grbesa, Franjic, Matkovic (Kuna 78'), Timmons, Pelikan (Zahra 86), Elvin,

Spiteri, Petrevski.

Cautions: Milardovic (1')

Goals: Timmonds (45'), Spiteri (52')

Man of the Match:
James Timmonds
(Melbourne Knights)

By Andrew Fisher

Photo by Darryl Kennedy



Melbourne Knights striker Joe Spiteri (No. 9) shows plenty of courage as he attempts to meet a corner against two defenders from Frankston Pines.

The Peninsula side kept Spiteri at bay on this occasion, but Spiteri later sealed the match in the Knights' favour and now move into equal top position in the Foxtel Cup standings.



HEIDELBERG
UNITED

2 - 2



GREEN GULLY
CAVALIERS

GULLY GETS OUT OF JAIL

Bergers unable to hold lead again

In a game of two extremely differing halves, the Green Gully Cavaliers did an "Iran" on the Heidelberg Warriors at Olympic Village this evening.

Green Gully had barely gotten out of their own half in the first fifteen minutes of the match, Heidelberg had already hit the post, pushed Gully keeper Steven Tilovski to full stretch, scored a goal as Mark Tsiorlas split the Gully defense in two and pushed the ball past Tilovski and were awarded a penalty which Steve Tilovski had saved.

The visitors had only stopped to take a breathe, when Daniel Jones scored a cracking header from just inside the Gully area, the ball looping over the Gully keeper Tilovski.

The Cavaliers went into the halftime break, not only trailing by two goals, perhaps fortunate not to be further down, by were on the receiving end from their coach Ian Dobson, who after the match admitted that the first half was perhaps the most disappointing he could remember whilst being coach of Green Gully.

The Cavaliers had been overwhelmed in midfield and the defense simply could not withhold the pressure.

Scottish Midfielder John Adam, Gully's top scorer so far this season, was substituted just 15 minutes into the match for Bosnian Kristijan Ivesic.

In the second half, Green Gully turned the game on its head. Kristijan Ivesic was the spark, he ran at at goal like it was water and he had caught fire.

Just five minutes into the second half, Ivesic capitalised on a Warriors defensive blunder, Warriors goalkeeper Marko Sutalo had the kicked from his hands by his own defender, and Ivesic put the ball into the back of the net off the goalpost.

Kristijan Ivesic came close on two more occasions shortly after his goal, but had put the ball just high and wide of the Heidelberg goal both times.

In the end, it was another substitute, and Gully's top scorer last year, Joel Nikolic who volleyed a long ball into the Heidelberg goal to level to the score.

With 20 minutes to play, Heidelberg had hit the panic button, using up all of their substitutions for defensive players, and in the end could have easily conceded another goal.

In the under 21's Green Gully won 1-0,

courtesy of a goal from Aziz Behich.

Heidelberg
25 Marko Sutalo
3 Daniel Jones
5 Robert Liparoti
6 Eric Vassiliadis
10 Graham Hockless
4 Tony Ouliaris
7 Josip Kozic
9 Mark Tsiorlas
20 Dennis Allilavic
11 Jimmy Drossos
2 Peter Roberts

8 Saso Alexovski
14 Amir Amich
16 Jammell Aimal
GK Costa Dimitropolous
12 James Stefano

Green Gully
23 Steven Tilovski
3 Steven Burton
4 Dean Fak
7 Jeffrey Fleming
9 Campbell Banks
10 Koce Delev

11 John Adam
14 Ryan Ollerton
15 Dragi Nastevski
16 Mile Medjedovic
17 Andy Vargas

00 Patric Ndonga
2 Kristijan Ivesic
6 Kole Delev
12 Matthew Sanders
18 Joel Nikolic

Heidelberg 2
(Mark Tsiorlas, Daniel Jones)
Green Gully 2
(Kristijan Ivesic, Joel Nikolic)

Man of the Match:
Steven Tilovski
(Green Gully)

Crowd: 1000
Venue: Olympic Village

By Markian Jaworsky
Photos by Daniel Flis



High fives all round for the Bergers! However, the good times were not to last the full ninety minutes, as for the second week in a row Heidelberg United were unable to hold on to their two goal lead, and had to settle for a share of the spoils after being in a commanding position early on in the match.

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JOEYS CLAIM THIRD IN LION CITY CUP

The Qantas Joeys (Australia U-17) claimed third place overnight at the eight-nation Lion City Cup Championship in Singapore with a 3-1 victory over Uzbekistan.

The Australian side scored two goals in the final six minutes through Trent Sainsbury and Kamal Ibrahim, after Nikola Stanojevic had opened the scoring in just the fifth minute.

Australia missed out on the final after losing 1-0 to the United Arab Emirates in the group stage. The other two group matches saw the Qantas Joeys record an 8-0 demolition of Chinese Taipei and a 1-0 win over host-nation Singapore.

Thailand won the tournament defeating the United Arab Emirates on penalties in the final with the match finishing 1-1.

The Qantas Joeys are building towards October's 2008 AFC U-16 Championship with the top four nations to represent Asia at next year's 2009 FIFA U-17 World Cup to be held in Nigeria.

Fixtures:

Australia V Chinese Taipei 8-0
10 March, Choa Chu Kang Stadium

Australia V United Arab Emirates 0-1
12 March, Jalan Besar Stadium

Australia V Singapore B 1-0
13 March, Jalan Besar Stadium

Finals -

15 March, Jalan Besar Stadium
Australia (Runner-up Group A) v Uzbekistan (Runner-up Group B) 3-1

The Joeys squad for the Lion City Cup Championship:
Eli Babalj (WA), Chris Bush (ACT), Million Butshiire (WA), Nathan Farrell (SA), Petar Franjic (VIC), Brendan Hamill (NSW), Kamal Ibrahim (VIC), James Jeggo (VIC), Robert Kolak (NSW), Jared Lum (NSW), Mitchell Mallia (NSW), Joel Miller (SA), Chahine Noujaim (SA), Trent Sainsbury (WA), Nikola Stanojevic (NSW), Nick Tubbs (QLD), Marc Warren (NSW), Tedros Yabio (VIC)



SOCCEROO SQUAD FOR SINGAPORE

Football Federation Australia has named a youthful Qantas Socceroos squad that will play the Singapore national team on Saturday 22 March at the Singapore National Stadium.

Only four of the squad named today by National Coach Pim Verbeek have been capped at full senior level with 12 of the 17-man squad all in contention to be part of the Qantas under 23s that will represent Australia at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

With a 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifying match to be played against China in Kunming only four days after the Singapore match, it is a vital opportunity for these players to push to be included in the final squad that will travel to China.

"I will not finalize my squad for the match against China until after the Singapore game so these players have a chance to impress and be included in the team for China," said Mr. Verbeek.

"There is a good possibility that some Europe-based players will be added to this squad to play Singapore if an early release from club duties can be negotiated".

"It is important that we continue to keep the Hyundai A-League players fit with vital national team and Olympic team matches coming up so this camp and match is important to us."

Hyundai A-League Grand Final winners Newcastle Jets are the most heavily represented club in the squad with five of the Championship winning team selected.

Players will arrive on Monday ahead of the Singapore match except for players from Adelaide United and Melbourne Victory who will join the camp after their Asian Champions League matches are played on Wednesday 19 March.

Both the Singapore match and World Cup qualifier against China will be shown live and exclusive on FOX SPORTS.

MATCH DETAILS

International Match
Singapore v Australia
Saturday 22 March 2008
National Stadium, Singapore

QANTAS SOCCEROOS SQUAD TO PLAY SINGAPORE

Nigel Boogard (Central Coast Mariners), Leigh Broxham (Melbourne Victory), Nathan Burns (Adelaide United), Billy Celeski (Melbourne Victory), Ante Covic (Newcastle Jets), Bruce Djite (Adelaide United), Tarek Elrich (Newcastle Jets), Adam Griffiths (Newcastle Jets), James Holland (Newcastle Jets), Mile Jedinak (Central Coast Mariners), Jade North (Newcastle Jets), Nikita Rukavytsya (Perth Glory), Archie Thompson (Melbourne Victory), Nikolai Topor-Stanley (Perth Glory), Tando Velaphi (Perth Glory), Ruben Zadkovich (TBC), Michael Zullo (Queensland Roar)

YOUTH LEAGUE TO START IN AUGUST

Football Federation Australia (FFA) has moved to secure the future of talented young players with the introduction of a National Youth League in conjunction with the next Hyundai A-League season.

"The establishment of a national youth league competition was identified as a priority in the National Football Development Plan we released last November," said FFA CEO, Ben Buckley.

"This competition is particularly important because, for the first time, talented young players will have an opportunity to play regular, quality competitive games regardless of whether they are part of the AIS program, the State sports institutes or the State football leagues.

"There is also a clear link with the Hyundai A-League, as well as the various national teams in football at Under 17, Under 20, Under 23 levels, as well as the Qantas Socceroos.

"If you're a young, talented male athlete, football should be your sport of choice as it offers fantastic opportunities within Australia as well as unparalleled opportunities to wear the green and gold representing Australia on the global stage," Buckley said.

The national youth league will comprise seven teams, with each of the current Australian Hyundai A-League teams also having a youth team. This linkage is very similar to development models used throughout European and English football competitions.

"The key to improving the technical skills, proficiency and tactical maturity of players is playing games – and as many games as possible," National Technical

Director of FFA, Rob Baan, said.

"The new national youth league competition will provide players aged between 16-21 years of age a clear pathway from youth leagues to senior level and then on to professional level. When combined with existing State-based competitions, players in the national youth league will play between 35-40 games each year.

"For Australia to improve its competitiveness in world football at all levels, our players must be playing competitive matches against quality opponents during this critical development period for young, elite sportsmen," Baan said.

The integration with the AIS programs means that the best 16-17 year olds will not only be recruited to the AIS on scholarship, but also be offered contracts by Hyundai A-League youth teams. State Institute players will be used on a replacement roster when required.

Baan describe the national youth league as being of "paramount importance" to the future technical development of football players in Australia.

Buckley added that the National Youth League competition will assist in the current and future development of Hyundai A-League clubs also.

Each of the current seven Australian Hyundai A-League clubs will field youth teams and play 21 rounds (18 Matches + 3 Byes) in line with the Hyundai A-League 2008/09 season draw. These matches will be scheduled as either curtain-raisers to Hyundai A-League fixtures or the day after, depending on the preference of the club.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE COMPETITION DETAILS

Competition Format

7 clubs

- o Adelaide United
- o Central Coast Mariners
- o Melbourne Victory
- o Newcastle Jets
- o Perth Glory
- o Queensland Roar
- o Sydney FC

o **Season:** 21 rounds (18 games + 3 Byes)

o **NYL to commence August 2008**

o **Age 16 – 21** (must be 16 on 1 January in year the Youth League commences), maximum age is 21; must be no older than 20 on 1 January in the year Youth League commences

o **15 Players on the team sheet.**

o **Each Youth Player must receive a minimum of 30 minutes game time**

o **4 over-age players** (including Goal Keeper) allowed to play in Youth League Match

National Youth League Player Regulations

- o 10 – 12 Youth Development Players per club
- o Youth Development Players will sign a Youth Development Agreement which is amateur status
- o Minimum agreement period – 1 season

o Maximum agreement period – 2 years

o Hyundai A-League Clubs can select any player within the age group, must be Australian (or in the process of obtaining citizenship) and can be from the AIS

o Hyundai A-League clubs must draw replacement players from the Youth League Player Squad, except under certain circumstances

Coaches

Each nominated Youth Head Coach should hold a minimum of a Football Federation Australia - B Coaching License (or acknowledged equivalent). For more details go to coaching.footballaustralia.com.au

Referees

Match Officials for National Youth League matches will be drawn from an elite panel of referees which have been identified for future Hyundai A-League appointments.





WHITTLESEA
ZEBRAS

V



FAWKNER
BLUES

EARLY SIX POINTER

KO 8.15pm Tonight at Epping



What we have coming up in tonight's Monday night clash between Whittlesea Zebras and Fawkner Blues could well be the defining moment in the season of both these struggling clubs.

Both clubs at the moment have had what could mildly be described as disappointing starts to their 2008 Foxtel Cup campaigns. The home side Whittlesea Zebras, currently lie on a solitary point and in thirteenth position on the league table.

They have lost three games and managed a draw against last year's champions, Preston Lions, in a grand final replay. Fawkner lie at the foot of the table in fourteenth position with no victories and four defeats from their opening four games.

Looking at the league positions you can see why this game will be most important to both teams. With Western Suburbs losing this weekend and South Melbourne not playing because of the Formula One Grand Prix (making Bob Jane Stadium unavailable), it means the winner could go up by a good few places, whilst the loser will start to see a gap developing between them and the rest.

The possibility of four being relegated this season it will start to become a big mountain to climb even at this early stage.

This all bodes well for the game though, because more than likely you will have two teams going at each other desperately looking for the three points.

A draw will probably do neither team any favours, so one way or the other, I think there will be a result. Neither team has what you would call a star studded line-up, however it is my belief that if you compare the two squads, the Zebras appear to have the better range of talent.

They have the experience of players such as Steve Martin, Gregory Lombardo,

Ross Antoniadis and Goran Talevski - players capable of influencing a game.

Fawkner have a much younger squad and many players are untested or haven't really performed well at this level in the past. Their most high profile player is goalkeeper Pasi Schwalger, and even he was dropped last week to make way for Wesley Coles.

Other players like Zia Younan, who was at the Preston Lions, and then you have a lot of "fringe" players who have yet to prove themselves at this level.

For me it comes down to the argument that if you look really at both squads, but especially at the Fawkner Blues squad you cannot see where their goals are going to come from on a regular basis. You generally figure if you can have one player who scores around the eight to ten goal mark and a few players who chime in with four or five then you tend to do OK for yourself.

Fawkner don't have a player in my opinion capable of scoring four or five goals in a season let alone ten, and while the Zebras don't have any obvious threats, I think there may be a few players who have the potential to contribute with fours and fives for the season.

When this game is all said and done I fully expect the home side the Whittlesea Zebras to be celebrating victory simply for the fact that over a squad to squad comparison they have the edge. Not to upset the Fawkner faithful, I seriously doubt they will be in the winner's circle much, if at all this season and I predict this game to go 2-0 to the Zebras.

The game is being played tonight at the Epping Soccer Stadium with an 8:15pm KO. The under 21's game starts at 6:15pm

By Reuben Schembri

Photo by John Punshon



Fawkner's Jason Principato will be hoping to prove the critics wrong when his side takes on rivals Whittlesea Zebras tonight at Epping Stadium.

FORMER SOCCEROOS GAIN A VOICE

Football welcomes its history

A group of former Socceroo players, with a combined playing tally of nearly 400 caps spread over half a century, gathered for an historic meeting with Football Federation Australia (FFA) during the week.

The group met with FFA CEO, Ben Buckley, and Board member, Phil Wolanski, to discuss a variety of issues concerned with the history of Australian football and the contribution made by national team players.

"As football continues to experience

huge growth and popularity, it is vitally important that we recognise the great history of the code and also the players who have made significant contributions representing Australia," Buckley said.

Amongst the group were long-serving Australian captains in Alex Tobin and Charlie Yankos, as well as legendary striker Ray Baartz, joined by former teammate John Watkiss, 1956 Olympian Ted Smith, Doug Wendt (debuted 1955), Denis Yaager (1970) and Kimon Taliadoros (1990).

(Another former captain, Paul Okon, is also a member of the group but was unable to attend.)

The issues discussed were the establishment of a Socceroo Club (a player alumni), a mentoring program comprised of former Socceroos, the establishment of an 'FA Cup' style competition, how to recognise the game's history and capture memorabilia, and the establishment of an annual football oration.

"Football has a history in Australia

which stretches back 128 years, and it is one in which all football fans, as well as all Australians, should be proud.

"I am delighted that those who have worn the green and gold have a voice to provide advice and input to what we're doing."

Buckley said that FFA will work with the members represented on the group to address a range of issues of mutual interest on behalf of all Socceroos.

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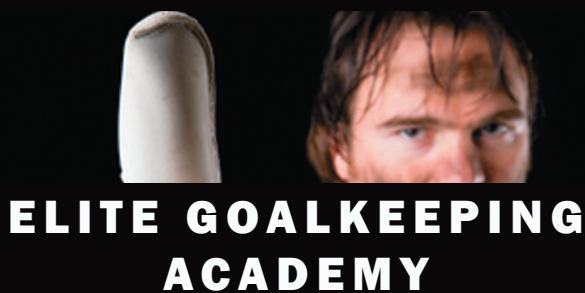
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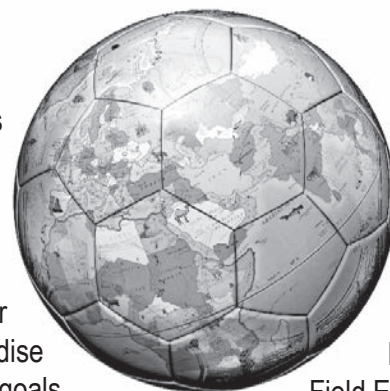
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FULL NAME: Richie Cardozo
BIRTHPLACE: Sydney, Australia
BIRTH DATE: 28/03/1986
HEIGHT: 182cm
WEIGHT: 77kgs
MARRIED: No
CAR: Porsche 911 Carrera/ Aston Martin (one day)
OCCUPATION OUTSIDE OF FOOTBALL: ha ha! You mean like a job?... me?... work?... nah...
NICKNAME: Rich
PREVIOUS CLUBS: F.C Bex (Switzerland), Green Gully, Waitakere United (New Zealand), Parramatta Eagles (NSW Premier league), Sydney Olympic (NSL), Parramatta Power (NSL)
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS: New South Wales Institute Of Sport, NSW State teams U14's, U15's, U16's, Autralian U16's and U17's Joeys
CHILDHOOD FOOTBALL HERO: Diego Maradona
FAVOURITE O/S PLAYERS: Cristiano Ronaldo, Kaka, Zinedine Zidane, Karim Benzema
FAVOURITE V-LEAGUE PLAYER: Pablo Cardozo
FAVOURITE FORMER SOCCEROO: Mark Bosnich
FAVOURITE CURRENT SOCCEROO: Nicki Carle
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A PLAYER: Under 17's World Cup vs Argentina
MOST MEMORABLE MATCH AS A FAN: In the stadium - River Plate vs Boca Juniors (Copa Libertadores semi final), Australia vs Argentina 1994 World Cup qualifier in Sydney...on TV - Liverpool vs AC Milan 2005 Champions League Final
MOST MEMORABLE GOAL YOU'VE SCORED: This one I scored in U11's!
FUNNIEST MOMENT IN FOOTBALL: Playing in Switzerland I cleared the ball quite hard as a very dubious free kick was given against us. It hit the ref in the side of the face and almost knocked him over! That side of his face was a redish pink colour for the rest of the game. (I swear I didnt mean it, but at times wish it happened more often).
BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT: Seeing so many gifted players not in the A-League.
WORST INJURY: Thank God nothing major. A few little knocks and strains is about it.
MOST DIFFICULT OPPONENT: I've played against John Obi Mikel and Fernando Gago... Guns!
FAVOURITE AWAY GROUND: Epping Stadium.
SUPERSTITIONS: No superstitions.
TYPICAL MATCH DAY MEAL: Depends, usually just a sandwich or some pasta.
WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS: Nights out after the game.
WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES: Beautiful women
FAVOURITE TEAM WHEN GROWING UP: Liverpool, Real Madrid, River Plate
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTS: Basketball, Ice Hockey, Surfing, Rugby League, Tennis, Formula1
FAVOURITE OTHER SPORTSPERSON: Michael Jordan
FAVOURITE FOODS: Parents Cooking, Subway, Chicken parma and chips
FAVOURITE ACTOR/ACTRESS: Johnny Depp, Denzel Washington and all the good looking women.
HOBBIES: Shopping, going out, surfing.
FAVOURITE HOLIDAY RESORT: Haven't been to any yet.
FAVOURITE NIGHTSPOT: Depends on what night and which city I'm in.
IDEAL DATE: Changes from week to week.
FAVOURITE TV SHOWS: Friends, Two and a Half Men, The Simpsons, Family Guy.
FAVOURITE MUSIC: A little bit of everything but generally house music.
FAVOURITE FILM: Too many to mention.
LAST SOCCER SHIRT YOU BOUGHT: I can't remember.
FUNNIEST RUMOUR YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT YOURSELF: None really that come to mind.
BIGGEST INFLUENCE ON CAREER: My family
BIGGEST DRAG IN SOCCER: Politics and coming across bad refs. Because you cant do anything about either.
FOOTBALL AMBITION: To play at some of the biggest clubs in Europe. Play in the Champions League and play in World Cups.
WHICH PERSON IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO MEET?: Borat!
YOUR TIP FOR THIS YEAR'S FOXTEL CUP: Richmond!

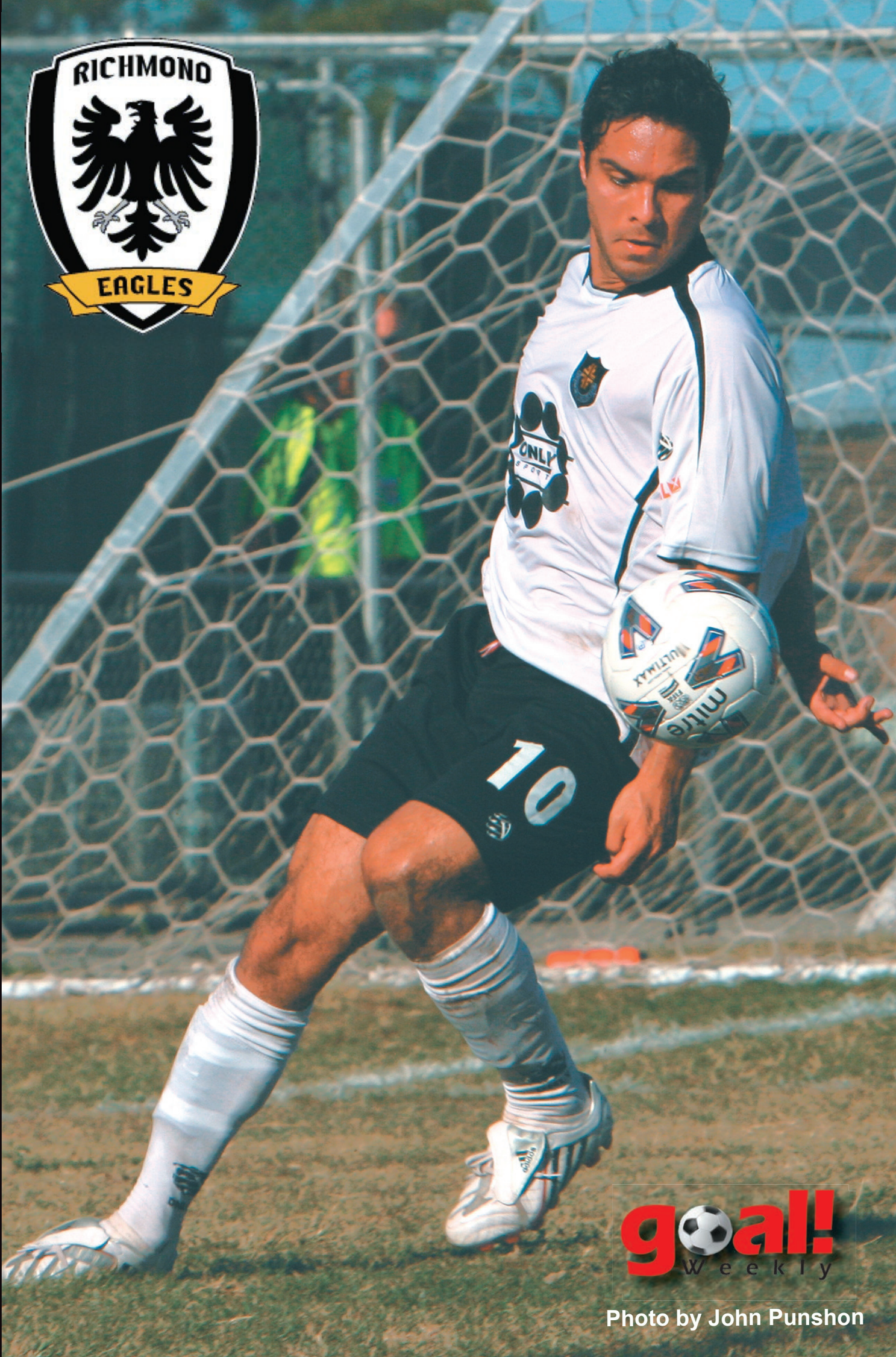


Photo by John Punshon

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NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE REWIND

When the seeds of blossoming talent were first sown

The Football Federation of Australia has just announced that it will start a National Youth League next season claiming ‘This competition is particularly important because, for the first time, talented young players will have an opportunity to play regular, quality competitive games regardless of whether they are part of the AIS program, the State sports institutes or the State football leagues.’

One can forgive the hype, but once again this ignores the history of the game, for there was a flourishing National Youth League with Northern, Southern and sometimes South Australian divisions for more than twenty years.

matches in the heat of the day as curtain raisers to senior games. On other occasions matches were switched or postponed to save the pitch for the NSL teams. This happened to the 1999 grand final which was eventually played at the Melbourne Knights ground, instead of before the South Melbourne versus Sydney United game at Olympic Park, much to the disappointment of both teams. Current Socceroo Josh Kennedy and Melbourne Victory wing-back Daniel Vasilevski were in the Australian Institute of Sport team which defeated Adelaide City in 1999, while Matthew Kemp, also starring with the Victory this season was in a winning AIS side in 1998. All three were on the scoresheet in the championship decider.

reason alone the competition deserved wider recognition than it received. Let’s hope the new version is as fruitful.

Right: Melbourne Croatia skipper Dino Mihocic holds aloft the NYL trophy in May 1990, presented by Sam Papasavas, Les Scheinflug and Peter Russell, with doyen of the youth league Billy Hodge in the background.



Mark Viduka, who starred in the NYL in his youth, with Ernie Merrick and a happy group of Victorian Institute of Sport players.

In its short existence Carlton won the NYL in 1999–2000 thanks to a goal by Daniel Debevc against Parramatta Power, which downed Whittlesea Stallions the following year. In the final season, 2003–04 Canberra Deakin overcame South Melbourne by two goals to one, with Andrew Barisic and Nathan Caldwell on target for the winner and Steven O’Dor

The Southern or Victorian division involved the youth teams of the National Soccer League clubs. Sometimes Melbourne Knights and South Melbourne fielded a youth and a colts team in the competition and the younger group took great delight in occasionally knocking off their elder brothers. Brunswick United Juventus, Heidelberg United, Footscray JUST, Green Gully, Morwell Falcons and Sunshine George Cross took part at various times. In addition the Victorian Institute of Sport and several Victorian State League clubs entered youth teams. Regional representative teams also took part including Geelong City and Albury-Wodonga.

Sunshine George Cross reached the divisional play-off for four years in succession in the 1980s, losing the first three narrowly, but then winning in 1989, the last year of the winter competition. John Campelj, Athan Zacharias and Marin Radobuljak scored in a three-two win over a powerful Marconi team for whom Geoff Gunning and Paul Okon netted, while Mark Schwarzer wore the gloves that day.

In 1989–90 the NYL switched to a summer tournament, which often meant tough

for South Melbourne.

The Northern Division involved New South Wales and Queensland teams, the Australian Institute of Sport and Academy teams. Drawing on a much larger pool of players the Northern Division was probably a stronger competition winning 11 of the play-off finals but the South Australian and Victorian divisions gave a good account of themselves, often defeating more fancied rivals.

The list of Socceroots, Olyroos, Young Socceroots and Joey’s who took part in the NYL is almost endless. Ned Zelic, Steve Horvat, Craig Moore, Kris Trajanovski, Damian Mori, Paul Trimboli, Aurelio Vidmar, Vince Grella and Marco Bresciano and many others played national youth league soccer on their way to the top.

Though the NYL came in for much criticism, some of it deserved, one of my abiding memories of the competition was when Geelong City played a Melbourne Croatia (now Knights) team which included Francis Awaratife, who was coming back after injury. The big striker spent the whole game coaching and encouraging the players around him, not

only his own teammates but also the young Geelong centre-back who was trying to mark him as tightly as possible and subjecting him to some fairly physical tackling. Micky Petersen used to do exactly the same for the South Melbourne youth team. Playing with stars like that, who were aware of the wider role of the NYL, was an inspiration for youngsters starting out on a soccer career and for this



South Melbourne’s Anthony Magnacca surrounded by Daniel Rocco (left), Jason Dimozantos (rear) and Simon Storey (right) of the VIS.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE GRAND FINALS

2003–04
Canberra Deakin 2
(Andrew Barisic, Nathan Caldwell)
South Melbourne 1
(Steven O’Dor)

2002–03
Parramatta Power 6
(Royce Brownlie 2, Richie Cardozo, Del Zio, Ray Younis, own goal)
Whittlesea Stallions 2
(Sam Kalakias, George Tsonis)

2001–02
Parramatta Power 2
(Peter Gavaghan, Adam Kwasnik)
Melbourne Knights 0

2000–01
Melbourne Knights 3
(Ivan Klarica, Adam Petko, Xhezair Sulemani)
Marconi Stallions 2
(Grant Last, Todd Brodie)

1999–2000
Parramatta Power 0
Carlton 1
(Daniel Debevc)

1998–99
Australian Institute of Sport 8
(Kevo Gulesserian 2, Joshua Kennedy 2, Grant Last, Johnny Cvetanovski, Daniel Vasilevski, own goal)
Adelaide City 1
(Robert Saraceno)

1997–98
Australian Institute of Sport 4
(Ivan Ergic, Chris Tanchevski, Matthew Kemp, David Onoforo)
Adelaide City 1
(Michael Cartwright)

1996–7
Sydney United 0
Melbourne Knights 1
(Branko Bacak)

1995–6
West Adelaide 1
(Greg Hagias)
Marconi 3
(Nick Bosevski 2, Vaughan Hunter)

1994–95
Sydney United 1
(Mario Jerman)
Melbourne Knights 0

1993–94
South Melbourne 2
(Jamie Skrepetis, Steve Panopoulos)
Sydney United 0

1992–93
Australian Institute of Sport 0
West Adelaide 1
(Peter Galentomos)

1991–92
South Melbourne Hellas 1
(Jim Iliopoulos)
Sydney Croatia 3
(Ivan Topic, Ante Milicic, Mirko Jurilj)

1990–91
Sydney Olympic 2
(Pablo Cardozo 2)
South Melbourne Hellas 3
(Steve Tasios 2, Con Boutsianis)
(After draw in first match in Melbourne)

1989–90
Apia Leichardt 1
(Maurice Reyes)
Melbourne Croatia 2
(Joe Bacak, Tom Lovric)

1989
Sunshine George Cross 3
(John Campelj, Athan Zacharias, Marin Radobuljak)
Marconi 2
(Geoff Gunning, Paul Okon)

1988
Marconi 2
(Geoff Gunning, Vince Colaguri)
Sunshine George Cross 1
(George Karkaletsis)

1987
Sydney Olympic 1
(Jason Bennett)
Sunshine George Cross 0

1986
Australian Institute of Sport 3
(Paul Foster 2, Jason Polak)
Sunshine George Cross 0

1985
Sydney City Hakoah 3
(Abbas Saad, Andrew Harper, Parish)
Heidelberg Alexander 0

1984
Melita Eagles 2
(Lennie Vial, Peter Whiteside)
South Melbourne Hellas 3
(Pepe Abraam 2, Harry Mavridis)

(Melita took place of AIS who were in Singapore for the Merlion Cup)

Words by Roy Hay
Photos provided by Roy Hay



RICHMOND
EAGLES

1 - 1

ALTONA
MAGIC

DOMINANT EAGLES FAIL TO CAPITALIZE

Magic scores early and holds on

It was first against fourth in the Foxtel Cup on Friday night at Kevin Bartlett Reserve. Both teams came off a four-day break in the week of a heatwave.

Richmond restored Pablo Cardozo to the starting eleven in place of Nick Kalambokis and welcomed Semir Sivic back from injury at the expense of Shane Rexhepi. On the other hand Altona Magic made no changes to the eleven that commenced the game against Western Suburbs the Sunday prior. The Eagles came in off a 5-0 thrashing of Fawknor Blues, whilst the Magic had beaten Suburbs 2-0 for their second win in a row and also maintaining an unbeaten record. The stage was set for a great contest.

The game was only eleven seconds old when Agim Sherifovski sent in a cross from the left that Antun Kovacic sliced into his own hand when trying to clear. From the resulting free kick, right on the edge of the penalty area, Michael Curcija sent the ball under the defensive wall and beyond the reach of Stuart Webster to give the Magic a very early lead.

The hosts came back at Altona, and in the third minute Semir Sivic had a shot saved when he cut in from the right and ran across goal. Michael Catalano's ball forward to

Jesse Krncevic was passed onto Richie Cardozo by the Eagles striker, who then played in George Goutzioulis on the edge of the box in the middle of goal but his chip went over the crossbar.

In the seventh minute Carl Recchia shot wide after the ball was laid off by Curcija. Four minutes later a Sivic cross was only partly cleared, Pablo Cardozo swooping on the ball but volleying wide with the outside of his foot. The dangerous Recchia turned Stuart McCluskey in the middle of the park in the twentieth minute, running in on goal before shooting wide. Goutzioulis tried to find Krncevic with a square ball at the other end five minutes later, but Krncevic just failed to connect with the ball after a desperate lunge.

Richmond were starting to dictate the tempo, but were unable to get on the score sheet after a Richie Cardozo cross was headed straight at Bojo Jevdjovic by Pablo Cardozo. In the thirty-third minute Richmond busted forward, the ball falling to Pablo Cardozo ten yards out who had a shot saved by Jevdjovic. A minute later Richmond gained the equaliser. A cross from Sivic on the right flank was swept in by Goutzioulis at the far post. The play balanced out after

the goal, and the sides entered the break with honours even.

As soon as play resumed Aaran Lines tested Jevdjovic with a cross which Krncevic challenged for. The next minute Sherifovski fluffed the chance to put the Magic back in front, shooting across the face of goal when in plenty of space at the far post after a great square ball from Recchia.

Richmond then went close to taking the lead in a pulsating encounter in the fifty-first minute. After pushing forward for a free kick, a half clearance and a blocked shot saw McCluskey smack a half volley from just outside the penalty area across the box and onto the post. The Eagles piled on the pressure, with a one touch lay-off from Pablo Cardozo setting up Goutzioulis who had his shot saved by Jevdjovic. A minute later Cardozo went down inside the penalty area when rolling the ball across the of the box and trying to make space for a shot, but referee Perry Mur dismissed the home side's appeals for a spot-kick.

Pece Siveski shot wide for Altona in the sixty-sixth minute after Henry Fa'Arodo's pass was relayed to him by Chris Rachkovski. Six minutes later Zoran Cvetkovski found Pablo Cardozo wide on the right, and

Krncevic headed his cross over the bar. The ball was again headed over the bar by Richmond four minutes later, Antun Kovacic failed to finish from Richie Cardozo's corner kick. A minute later Krncevic headed a cross from Lines wide, as it became clear that all the momentum was with Richmond.

From a Krncevic cross in the seventy-ninth minute, Richie Cardozo brought the ball down before shooting wide. Lines was getting forward regularly for the Eagles, and three minutes later whipped in a cross which Goutzioulis headed over the bar. A minute later he sent in another great ball, which Dimitri Tsiaras didn't meet with a good first touch and the Magic managed to scramble the ball away before he could slip it past an advancing Jevdjovic. With three minutes remaining, Richie Cardozo shot across the goalmouth from the left side of the box. The final whistle blew with the scores still level, with the unbeaten home side feeling they should have got more out of one of the best Foxtel Cup games so far this season.

Match details:

Richmond: *St.Webster, A.Lines, S.McCluskey, D.Tsiaras, J.Krncevic, S.Sivic, R.Cardozo, P.Cardozo, G.Goutzioulis, A.Kovacic, M.Catalano (Z.Cvetkovski 46').*

Yellow Cards: *Cvetkovski 76'*
Red Cards: *None*

Goal: *Goutzioulis 34'*

Altona Magic: *B.Jevdjovic, S.Mrkela, C.Anthopoulos, D.Mladenovic, H.Fa'Arodo, C.Recchia (G.Lambadaridis 85'), M.Curcija, P.Siveski, A.Sherifovski (C.Rachkovski 63'), P.Cergovski (J.Konyit 75'), T.McSorley.*

Yellow Cards: *Cergovski 52'*
Red Cards: *None*

Goal: *Curcija 1'*

Man of the Match:
Stuart McCluskey (Richmond)

Venue: *Kevin Bartlett Reserve*
Crowd: *300*

By Mark Boric

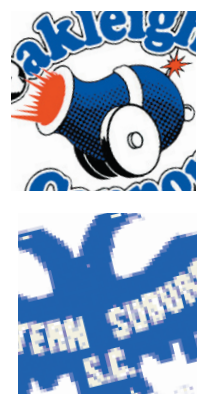
Photos by John Punshon

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OAKLEIGH
CANNONS

1 - 0

WESTERN
SUBURBS

DRAK ADDS BITE TO OAKLEIGH ATTACK

Cannons crack stubborn Suburbs

Oakleigh Cannons overcame stiff resistance from a determined Western Suburbs outfit at Jack Edwards reserve on Friday night, to post their third successive 1-0 win of the season.

Although the visitors seldom threatened, they worked hard to limit the home team to just several half-chances. It took the experienced head of Cannons defender Stelios Drakos, to score the breakthrough goal in the 78th minute.

The Suburbs started with striker Vas Kalogeracos leading the frontline, with wide players Dimi Hatzimouratis and Tomi Razov supporting him down the flanks. The tussle between Hatzimouratis and Cannons' left back Aris Drakos was one of the most competitive of the night, with the Cannons' defender holding his own against the skilful flanker.

A Hatzimouratis back header from a long Evan Karavitis pass, almost looped over keeper Adrian Cagalj in the Cannons goal, before he made a fingertip save.

The Cannons too seemed to be relying on a direct approach in the first half, booting long 50-50 balls over the congested midfield to their forwards, resulting in frequent turnovers. Frank Lagana went close with an effort from close range but the best chance fell to striker Tex Apostolikas who had a one on one with Suburbs keeper Stjepan Gal in the 33rd minute. However the striker hesitated long enough for Gal to close him down and smother the shot. It ended a frustrating half for the young striker, who was replaced at the break by Milos Lujic.

The longer the game went without a goal in the second half, the harder the home team pressed forward with wide midfielder Trent Waterson looking threatening. The attacking pressure eventually paid off when Bill Damianos's 78th minute corner found the head of Stelios Drakos who steered the ball into the goal, giving Oakleigh a place in the top four.

Coach Stuart Munro said after the game, " Very, very pleased again with the resilience the players have shown again. This week we had to chase to try and get the goal. It was a long time coming. Full credit to Suburbs who were a difficult opposition." On the team's impressive defensive record this season, Munro added, " Four clean sheets

in a row, from a coaching point of view you can't ask for more than keeping these clean sheets, because it gives you a chance."

A disappointed Western Suburbs coach Con Pappas said afterwards, " I thought all our players played very well today. They did everything that was asked of them. Kept their shape and discipline for the 90 minutes. We were unlucky not to come out of here with a result. We thought that if we could score first we could beat them. We had a couple of chances in the first and second halves but unfortunately we can't score, that's the problem."

Match details:

Cannons:
A.Cagalj, S.Kelly (S. Webster 76'), A. Drakos, T. Apostolikas (M. Lujic 45'), F. Rosman, F. Lagana (Khrapko 76'), S. Drakos, J.Nilo, B. Damianos, T. Waterson, M. Foschini

Scorer: *S. Drakos 78'*

Yellow cards: *None.*
Red cards: *None.*

Western Suburbs:
S. Gal, J. Cvetanoski (E. Cetkin 60'), M. Batur, E. Karavitis, A Tsonis, T.Antoniadis, L. Kidtner, I. Razov (K. Tsiouris 88'), T. Razov, V. Kalogeracos (R. Damianou 79'), D. Hatzimouratis

Scorers: *None*

Yellow cards: *Cvetanovski 39', Batur 52'.*
Red cards: *None.*

Man of the Match: *A. Drakos*

Crowd: *600*
Venue: *Jack Edwards Reserve*

By Gerorge Stogiannou

Photos by Joseph Sirucka



Oakleigh Cannons' 'keeper Adrian Cagalj collects the ball on the way to a fourth consecutive clean sheet against Western Suburbs on Friday night at Jack Edwards Reserve.



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Chonburi FC (Thailand) v Melbourne Victory

THE CHONBURI CHALLENGE

After slaying Dragons, Victory face tough Thai test

Melbourne Victory made a dream start to its debut season in the AFC Champions League last Wednesday night, when it overwhelmed Korean outfit Chunnam Dragons 2-0 on home soil.

A penalty from Victory skipper Kevin Muscat and a header from robust defender Rodrigo Vargas secured a famous first Asia Champions League victory, with the Melbourne side dominating the majority of the match at Telstra Dome.

The triumph sees Victory 'sitting pretty' at the top of Group G, two points clear of their other Asian opponents, Thailand's Chonburi FC and Japan's Gamba Osaka, who fought out a 1-1 draw in match day one.

However, celebrations will be relatively short-lived for Ernie Merrick's side, as it now faces a tough task away to Chonburi in Bangkok this Wednesday.

Chonburi will be full of confidence heading into the match against the Victory, after almost conquering J-League's Gamba Osaka in their first group match.

Gamba grabbed a late and deserved equaliser against Chonburi, after controlling much of the game with slick passing and penetrations which constantly threatened the Thai side's

goal.

Chonburi sat back and absorbed much of Gamba's pressure, but one rare forward attack paid off for the Thai side, when Arthit Sunthornpit pounced on a rebound in the 59th minute, and gave his side a surprise 1-0 lead.

Chonburi spent the rest of the match hanging onto their slender lead, with goalkeeper, Kosin Hathairattanakool, making a string of crucial saves to keep his team in front.

But a fairytale start to the campaign was not to be for the visiting side, with Osaka's Brazilian stiker, Lucas, spoiling the show with 30 seconds of injury time remaining, lashing home a rebound to give the home side a share in the spoils.

Despite dropping two points in the dying seconds, Chonburi's manager, Jadet Meelarp, was thrilled with the result.

Meelarp claimed that although his side failed to pull off a shock victory against Osaka, his team performed extremely well, neutralising Osaka's continuous attacks, and he admitted that he never expected to achieve such an outcome.

Meelarp also praised his own work in churning out the significant result, adding that his extensive research

of Gamba's recent matches helped the side to nullify Osaka's tactical superiority and attacking surges.

Chonburi's entry into the AFC Champions League came after they comfortably won the Thailand Premier League title last season by nine points, becoming the first Provincial League side to win the championship in its history.

In only their second Premier League season, after being promoted from the Thailand Provincial League in 2005, Chonburi won 19 games, drew six and lost only five matches to be crowned the 2007 Thai Champions, and secure a place in this season's AFC Champions League.

The Sharks, as the Chonburi fans label them, have started well in their title defence with three wins and one draw from its first four outings in this season's Thailand Premier League.

The club is located near the Gulf of Thailand, in the heavily industrialised province of Chonburi, which is also a well-known seaside destination, around 80 kms from Bangkok.

Victory's main concern will be scoring past in-form goalkeeper Kosin Hathairattanakool, who has been a member of the Thailand national team since 2004, and received the Most Valuable Player award in his club's championship season in 2007.

The 25-year-old had an outstanding game against Osaka, confining the opposition to only one goal and shielding numerous onslaughts from the likes of Japanese international Yasuhito Endo.

Victory will not have the luxury of strong home support in its second group match; the away fixture against Chonburi is to be played at Suphachalasai National Stadium in Bangkok, which has a capacity of 35,000.

The Victory may also be forced to wear an away strip, as the Chonburi Sharks wear predominantly blue with white stripes.

Founded in 2002, Chonburi is a young club on the rise in Thailand, and will be a difficult task for the Melbourne Victory on match day two, due to their unfamiliar style and their surprising ability to achieve great results, as illustrated against Osaka.

The match against Chonburi will be shown exclusively on Fox Sports 1 from 10pm AEDT.

Victory will then host what is expected to be a crucial fixture against Gamba at Telstra Dome on Wednesday, 9 April.

Tickets for the match against Gamba are available from any Ticketmaster outlet, by calling 136 100 or through ticketmaster.com.au.

By Julius D. Ross

Photo by Daniel Flis



Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
AL ITTIHAD (SYR)	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
AL ITTIHAD FC (SAUDI ARABIA)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
KURUVCHI FC (UZBEKISTAN)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
SEPAHAN (IR IRAN)	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
AL QUWA AL JAWIYA (IRQ)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
KUWAIT SC (KUWAIT)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
SAIPA (IR IRAN)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
AL WASL SPORTS CLUB (UAE)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
AL KARAMA (SYR)	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	3
AL SADD SPORT CLUB (QATAR)	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
AL AHLI (SAUDI ARABIA)	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
AL WAHDA (UAE)	1	0	0	1	1	4	-3	0

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
AL QADSIYA (KUWAIT)	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
AL GHARAF (QAT)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
ARBIL (IRAQ)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
PAKHTAKOR (UZBEKISTAN)	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
ADELAIDE UNITED FC (AUSTRALIA)	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
CHANGCHUN YATAI FC (CHINA PR)	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
BINH DUONG FC (VIETNAM)	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	0
POHANG STEELERS(KOR)	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
KASHIMA ANTLERS FC (JAPAN)	1	1	0	0	9	1	8	3
BEIJING GUOAN FC (CHINA PR)	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
NAM DINH (VIETNAM)	1	0	0	1	1	3	-2	0
KRUNG THAI BANK (THAILAND)	1	0	0	1	1	9	-8	0

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	+/-	Pts
MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUSTRALIA)	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
CHONBURI (THAILAND)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
GAMBA OSAKA (Japan)	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
CHUNNAM DRAGONS (KOREA REP.)	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

NEXT ROUND

BINH DUONG FC (VIETNAM) v
POHANG STEELERS(KOR)
Wed 19 Mar KO 18:00

ADELAIDE UNITED FC (AUSTRALIA) v
CHANGCHUN YATAI FC (CHINA PR)
Wed 19 Mar KO 19:30

CHUNNAM DRAGONS (KOREA REP.) v
GAMBA OSAKA (Japan)
Wed 19 Mar KO 19:30

CHONBURI FOOTBALL CLUB (THAILAND) v
MELBOURNE VICTORY FC (AUSTRALIA)
Wed 19 Mar KO 19.30



Melbourne Victory will once again be looking to the internationally experienced Kevin Muscat to lead by example in the Asian Champions League.



**ANOTHER GOOD REASON TO
START LIKING MONDAYS AGAIN**

New website not too far away either...



Gas Bagging, News & Views



TSIGAN'S TSIGAR

With Mike Lilikakis



FREE FOR FREE

So what's up with all the hoolabooloo over Grand Pricks, or Prix if you're French.

Luckily for me, I had Junior Dan the Man Bountroukas give us the short and curly's over what the Saturday fiesta or fiasco at Albert Park was really about. The plot consisted of free beers, free food and free fanny Omaha.

Mark Webber should be in showbiz. What with the wood bench jaw line he could inevitably get a gig as Ridge Forrester's bastard love child in the Bold and Beautiful. In essence, there's snot a green booger doubt in my mind that a Sikh could steer the F1 cars with more poise than Webber, that is, if the Sikh could fit his carpet snake hat in the helmet. Didn't Webber have a BBQ named after him? Well, he stunk like a charcoal throwback after a Barbie at Klaus' house.

Celebrity races have lost their encomium for my money. Not that I have any, hence Tsigan. Once again I was delicately and tactfully berated by my cousin Mick at the Lalaland Lunation yesterday. Of concern was my lack of passion for fast cars, and the wow, pizzazz, fructose and uber fantasimo of the F1.

Actually, that extends to all manner of racing cars, and I mean across the board. Cars that roar and screech, smash and roll, just don't do it for me. Give me 5 days of Geoff Boycott in a Yorkshire state of mind, and I fall asleep, sure, but I still get to see the rest of the Poms get hammered by Lillee and Thomson. Sam could pitch a few beauties too, by the way.

Horses that run fast around a track, and the inebriated minions that squeal like piglets on acid when the horse is about to go past the post are another hate which I pet fiercely. Now THERE'S a sport of kings. Then again, the kings are the ones that squeal like pigs on acid, so that evens out of its own accord.

HEARD BUT NOT SEEN

The inexplicable wonder of anonymity is most phenomenal. How else could Bruce Wayne, Peter Parker, Clark Kent and myself get together in civvies for a macchiato at the old Warehouse on a Thursday night? It's been a few drinks in between since the last session we had on the skateboard ramp on Malvern Road, but that's only because Lois Lane, Vicky Vale and Mary Jane banned us from playing chess at 4am as a result of said sessions at said skateboard ramp on said nights after said games which I have never said or mentioned, but said in previous diatribes against chicks who don't let blokes get together for said sessions etc.com..

I am making it my mission to do more than just bring back the Fapa, Batso and Sfaylara.

You can do no harm to your Frank Talia, or Gen Italia by presuming the Clothesline and Figure Four will be seen at a theatre near you. I'd produce it, but would rather concentrate on Japanese domination victory scenario on Civ 3 Complete. Best waste of time bar none. Bar Nun would be a Jewish Penguin who could morph into anything she wanted to under the right prose.

Prose, ha ha ha ha ha.

Strike a prose.

Madonna is crap.

"Don't say that man, she's alright." quoth the Editor.

"No she's snot." sayeth I.

DIRE STRAITS

Not just money for nothing and chicks for free.

Of a certainly, not a place where the cliffs ram the Argonaut.

Yea verily, it's where the world is headed. Sadly, the consensus and resignation by the echelon continue to use figures of speech with pointed conjunction of apparent contradictions daily, and yet NO ONE stands up and says Bo Diddly McSquat.

The pacification between the order, only results in more apathetic murmur to whita kseftilizmeni* gather for a chirp and squat, beer or twelve at the local after work.

Experts in the field of mediocrity.

50/50 ravers without a clue, but for the notion that it's only they who get screwed tighter than a Flying Dutchman on Knotty Day. To think y'all thought that life has nothing more than what you go and get yourself, and if some one else gets there before you, than you're boo hoo waah waah hard done by.

As I see it, blokes don't double clink their beers in accord on a 38 degree day anymore, and that is a skata soufflé mixed with larks vomit and delicately whipped in a fondue. Mates are acquaintances, a bro is anyone who gives you a smoke, and Tsigan is fed up with all that classification and whimsical terminology loosely directed at this generation. Pah, you make me wanna WRETCH!

Substitution being made.

CELEBRATE CELEBRATION

Catchy heading, with nothing more than a spurious connotation. B Flat.

Man, if any of us could have a buck for every time a woman said that us blokes think with our little heads instead of the big one. Tsigan believes it depends on which angle. Another sad misconception, is that all blokes have is sex on their mind. Weird since sports, cars, sports cars and beers take up 95% of a blokes thought process. Sex is a stiff venture for the better part of 3 minutes for every bloke that's not a porn star. Fact is, porn stars use 95% of their brain for sex, because the other 5% is dedicated where to score next.

We have bills to pay, kids to feed, a missus to pacify and impress, wine and dine, and then maybe a bit of crumpet for breakfast. Then we get accused of looking at a chicks norks when they are obviously out on display

for blokes to ogle at, otherwise what's the point? Imagine a world in which blokes had no real sexual drive, or boobie scan?! We would have our nuts in a vice quicker than Crockett and Tubbs on a speedboat, chasing that marikon Calderone through Miami.

My wife is a top bird.

How's that for love of feminism.

Equality? Muahahahaha...chicks always get their way, or you'll have your clackers viced, Bobbited then deposited at your nearest National Park or Freeway exit. Seriously, she's grouse.

TF

**(hard core greek word which if translated properly would result in my being taken off the Naughty List, and placed on the Peevish List)*



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BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric



I understand each of the Foxtel Cup teams (AIS most likely excluded, or course) have once again been billed \$1600 for advertising.

That has been happening for a few years now, however, since this advertising levy came in a few things have changed. For one, the FFV have put no money into Goal! Weekly since the initial season of this paper.

I scoured last Friday's Herald-Sun looking for an advertisement with the weekend's fixture details on it but didn't find one. This had been appearing for most of last season, but haven't noticed any such ad this year.

As I've mentioned in earlier columns, the Foxtel Cup website was updated once in the period between the new year and the season kicking off. It's almost fraudulent behaviour, charging someone for a service which you fail to provide, is it not?

The recent heatwave has me wondering if a Summer League is all that wise. Most players can put up with these conditions once or twice early in the season, but I doubt it is in anyone's best interests to play in a

competition where the majority of the games could be played under the excessive heat policy and the additional life-saving drinks break that comes with it each half.

In light of the tragic death of seventeen year old netballer Emma McVilly in Warrnambool last week provides a cautionary tale. The doctor who tried to revive her said it appeared she had fallen and hit her head, leading to a seizure and cardiac arrest. "She may have been dehydrated all day or someone said she had had a chest pain all day," he said.

FFV have joined the Play by the Rules campaign. At first I laughed out loud, given some of the inconsistencies in their enforcing of the rules over the years. Then I clicked on the website link and found out the campaign is more focussed fighting discrimination and harassment rather than just promoting general fair play. Which is a good thing.

Speaking of the FFV website, on their scrolling list of FFV memos I noticed the Suspensions Carried Over For Season 2008 document. Which doesn't contain the name of the suspended player Fawcner Blues played against Melbourne Knights,



The new logo for the hugely anticipated Victorian Summer Competition.

eventually costing them the game 0-3 by the FFV tribunal. So how does all that work? Incompetence. If it's on your resume or school

report, you know where you can still get a job.....

Victory in Asia is how Melbourne's ACL campaign commenced, with a 2-0 win over the Chunnam Dragons. Could they be the first Aussie team to make it to the second stage? Hopefully the answer is yes.

The football hooligan movie I am working on will include many homages to the greatest sports movies of all time. For Slap Shot I will use Oglethorpe as a character name as well as the inclusion of Maxine Nightingale's Right Back Were We Started From on the soundtrack. For Field of Dreams the line "Is this Heaven?" will be used by a young hool during his first epic ruck.

And I will be resurrecting the character of Tank O'Donohue from The Club, with the former rugged footy star joining a hooligan firm to get a fix of the violence he has been missing since his playing days ended.

Until next week, because in this weather there's no way the creek is gonna rise.



KATSA'S KORNER

With George Katsamboukas

KATSA'S KORNER
0-5

GOALS PAY THE RENT

The Australian Government Economic Gurus announced this week that Australia's rate of unemployment was at an all time low.

The Scorer announced immediately after that he would soon be looking for alternative work, for he has not had anything to do this year.

Reason? The Foxtel Cup coaches have managed to do something that they never have been able to do so before, and that is after 5 Rounds, they are all still gainfully employed, for now....

"BUBBLES" BLOWS BUBBLES

Ernie could not hide his elation after his Victory Boys kicked off their campaign in the "Happy End" Asia Cup campaign with a 2-0 win.

He hopes that they bring back the bacon next week after they fly over the hills and far away to play their first away match.

Not to be out done, Aurelio's Adelaide's also won their first game 2-0, which is a great start for both Aussie teams.

SCORING WITHOUT THE BALL

Fellow columnist Craig MacKenzie came out punching in last week's edition, with two very interesting stories concerning Victorian Soccer.

The first was about Drug Testing of players.

Thankfully for many players, alcohol is not considered a prohibitive substance.

For if it were, and the FFV could

come up with the \$700 needed to analyse the contents of test tubes filled with yellow matter, provided for by the players, I somehow think that they would not only clean up with the fines for breaches, but there would not be many players left not suspended to be able to play.

The second was concerning alleged breaches of the salary caps in the Foxtel Cup.

Mark's reaction, by the way, G'Day Mark, to the Salary Cap Breach was that "If I had another \$300,000 or \$400,000 then maybe the policy could have been retained.

Now in the wee hours of a Saturday morning, I tried to do the math as to how he arrived at that figure, and if he did have access to these amounts, how would they be used to make this policy work?

I had two choices.

Continue to try and work this one out, or have another J Walker.

Option 2 was the winner.

ORDER IN THE COURT

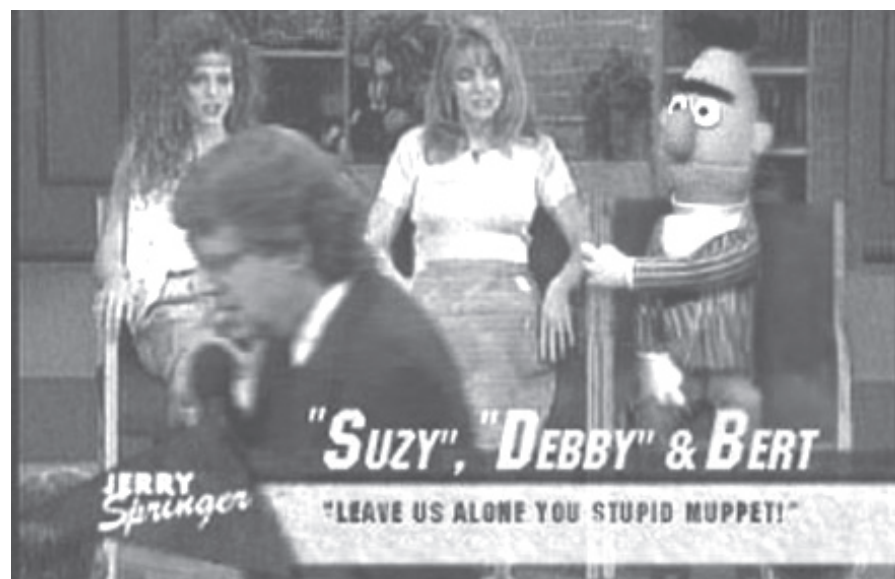
Last week I was unfortunately guilty of False Reporting when I wrote that FFV Tribunal matters were heard at the following address:

*Psychologists Registration Board,
Level 10, 379 Collins Street,
Melbourne, Victoria,
Australia 3000*

Actually, it was not false reporting, but misleading reporting.

According to a little birdie that's the address above is where all FFV Tribunal matters are heard.

Thankfully my days as a player



Tribunal nights would be so much more entertaining if it could adopt a Jerry Springer style approach.

are over, and I do not have to attend these hearings, as if I attended the address above and hung around till the morning for Psychological assistance, it would be the psychologist who would then need further counselling after spending an hour with me, trying to analyse how the Katsa mind works.

RAMMING IT HOME

Over to the UK we go where Derby County Gaffer Paul Jewell has made sure that the Rams do not have more points than his drivers licence.

As written before, that was the big statement that he made when he took on the Gaffer's job at Pride Park, that "He had more points on his drivers licence than Derby had points in the EPL"

I think that your Drivers licence is safe Paul; however, the Rams have about as much chance of staying in the EPL as I have of being invited to the FFV for Tea and Scones with the Commissioners.

COUNTDOWN

Kids count the days till Xmas, Soccer Junkies count the days till all the Victorian Leagues commence and they only have 19 sleeps to go.

2008 should be an interesting Season for some Clubs, and we all should remember.

It's not where we start that matters but where we finish.

The Westgate is only a few Toll Clicks away.....

This is Katsa – Just as you've known him.

TARKA SET FOR MORE GLORY

Talented West Australian defender David Tarka has committed to the rejuvenation of Perth Glory with a new one year deal to remain at the club.

The winner of the 'Most Glorious Player' award in 2006/07, Tarka will be a major inclusion in Glory's defence following a season spent on the sidelines.

"David is a skilful and uncompromising defender and we're confident he has the capacity to reclaim his status as one of Australia's premier footballers," Glory Coach Dave Mitchell said.

"He has worked extremely hard to regain his fitness and will be a great asset for the club going forward," said Mitchell.

The 25 year old believes his best years are ahead and that staying in Perth will allow him to achieve his football goals.

"I'm totally committed, as I've always been, to helping this club reinstate itself as a powerhouse in Australian football," Tarka said,

"There are challenges ahead both personally and for all of us as a group and I look forward to tackling them head-on and making sure we break into the top four and play finals football," he said.

Given a clean bill of health Tarka is positive that a frustrating run of injuries can finally be put to rest.

"I have a fantastic support group around me in Perth who are entirely focused

on helping me achieve my personal goals on the playing field and I'm extremely grateful for that," Tarka said.

Tarka joined Perth Glory from the Australian Institute of Sport in 2001 and was a key contributor in the club's first NSL Championship in 2002/03. His burgeoning talents have earned him dual Socceroos selection and a two year stint abroad with Nottingham Forrest before returning to the Glory for their inaugural Hyundai A-League campaign.

"David is passionate and committed to Perth Glory and his desire to remain here reinforces the strong belief we all share that the club is heading in the right direction," Mitchell added.

Perth Glory currently has 11 contracted players for the 2008/09 season and is continuing a thorough and extensive recruiting process. Details of players added to the squad will be released upon the completion of negotiations.



Western Australia

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NSW & TASMANIA

ALL SQUARE AT BELMORE

Sutherland still top in NSW Premier League

An uninspiring 1-1 draw with Sydney Olympic at Belmore was enough to keep the Sutherland Sharks on top of the NSWPL ladder after the fourth round of matches.

With last week's hat-trick man Matthew Mayora suspended, Olympic's coach Milan Blagojevic decided to overhaul the forward line completely, fielding Anthony Hartshorn in an unfamiliar lone striker role, with only Chris Triantis breaking from midfield to support him. The Sutherland side was unchanged from last week's victory over Manly.

Sutherland nearly opened the scoring after just two minutes, when Brendan Gan's close-range header forced Michael Herbert into a good save. Otherwise, the opening fifteen minutes of the game were scrappy indeed, with Sutherland collecting two yellow cards for poor challenges.

Olympic posed danger occasionally, mostly thanks to the dead-ball ability of Shannon Cole. On fifteen minutes, one of his floaters from the right was half-cleared to Michael Cindric, who shot over the bar; soon afterwards, Roger Galayini got his head to another Cole special, and the ball was cleared off the line by a Sutherland defender.

Sutherland's best chance of the half arrived on the half-hour. A good passing move from left to right reached the overlapping Michael Katz, whose fine cross found Jim

Bakis unmarked in the box. Attempting a scissor-volley, he put the ball over the bar on the bounce; a header would surely have been simpler and more effective.

At the other end, Shannon Cole almost scored a goal direct from a corner, but his swerving left-footed delivery was again headed off the Sutherland line.

Half-time came, and the spectators would not have been feeling particularly enthused.

Sutherland had two chances in quick succession early in the second half. A corner reached Pedje Bojic in the area, and his blazing left-footed shot whizzed over the bar; soon afterwards, Jim Bakis's useful right-wing cross – one of many such deliveries from the Sutherland man – was headed wide by Ben Spruce.

Yet Sutherland were in trouble at the other end, where Shannon Cole's set-pieces continued to torment the away side. On 58 minutes, one of his inswinging corners was headed straight back to him, and his audacious attempt to beat Zabaks at his near post was, once again, cleared off the line. Two minutes later, a Cole corner from the other end; this time, a Sutherland player headed back towards goal, after Zabaks had flapped at the ball; yet again, a desperate goal-line clearance was required.

Cole finally hit paydirt on 62 minutes, when his deep, well-flighted free kick from the left caused confusion in the

Sutherland area. Zabaks was in no-man's land again, the ball ran loose, and Chris Triantis stabbed home.

With Sutherland pushing plenty of men forward, Olympic had their chances to extend their lead on the break, but the front-men were inclined to take one or two touches too many. Zabaks was indeed called into action when Roger Galayini set off on an inspired run from deep, but his eventual shot was palmed away by Sutherland's keeper; Cole latched onto the rebound and created room for a thumping left-footed shot, which Zabaks did well to hold.

Sutherland finally fashioned an equalizer on 80 minutes. Again, Jim Bakis sent a telling ball in from the right, this time from a free kick; this time, however, Brad Boardman nipped ahead of his marker Michael Cindric and beat Herbert with a powerful header.

At least another week on the top of the table for Sutherland, then. Olympic, for their part, will feel that this was two points dropped.

**Sydney Olympic 1 (Triantis)
Sutherland Sharks 1 (Boardman)**

Sydney Olympic: Herbert; Cole, Cindric, Jurilj, Zunino (Sherlock); Galayini, Simonovic, Zorbas, Doumanis (Kovas); Triantis (C.Musumeci); Hartshorn.

Sutherland Sharks: Zabaks; Katz, Souris, Bojic, Spruce; Bakis, Huxley (Lawrence), Gan, Stavroulakis (Reid), Lyons (Smith); Boardman.

MVP Points:

3 – Jim Bakis (SS). In a game in which no-one really stood out, Bakis's delivery from the right was ultimately the factor which got Sutherland back in the game.

2 – Emmanuel Zunino (SO). A solid performance at left-back for the home side.

1 – Shannon Cole (SO). Although he contributed little from free play, his set-pieces continue to be Olympic's main weapon.

Manly United FC 3 (Dusan Mihajlovic 21m Ashley Ryan 37m Robbie Cattnach 65m) Marconi Stallions 0, Macarthur Rams 0 Wollongong FC 1 (Osagie Ederaro 55m), Sydney Olympic 1 (Chris Triantis 55m) Sutherland Sharks 1 (Bradley Boardman 80m).



By Mike Salter
in Sydney

IT'S ZEBRAS V SOUTH HOBART!

Tilford to defend Summer Cup title

Tilford Zebras will defend their Summer Cup title in southern Tasmanian when they face South Hobart in the final on Easter Monday.

But, for the Zebras, reaching the final was a close call.

They had completed their four-match program in Group B with 8 points and had to sit back this weekend and hope the other results went their way, which they surprisingly did.

Kingborough Lions United and New Town Eagles were both on 6 points, with one game to play, and a win for either would have put them top of the group and given them a place in the final.

But, the Lions went down 2-0 to Clarence United at KGV Park on Friday night, while Eagles were held to goalless draw by Glenorchy Knights at South Hobart on Saturday, and it was the Zebras who progressed to the final.

South Hobart also had to survive jangling nerves to reach the final after being on top of Group A with 8 points and with a game against Metro to play.

Hobart Olympic moved to 10 points on Friday night by beating University 2-0 through two first-half goals by Nick Meredith.

This meant South Hobart had to beat Metro, which they did 2-1, but they did it the hard way.

Coach Ken Morton had four key players on the bench and rested Hugh Ludford, Matthew Brown and goalkeeper Mark Moncur, but with the score 1-1 at half-time, he brought on Billy Gasparinatos, Jonathon Ladic and Jonathon Foley-Donoghue for the second half. Wain had come on late in the first half and eventually scored the winner.



Eagles' Nathan Pitchford saved three penalties against the Knights.

Shae Hickey gave South the lead from Tom Roach's cross in the 17th minute, but substitute Edward Guma levelled for Metro in the 27th minute with almost his first touch of the game.

Midway through the second half, Metro keeper Michael McKenna failed to hold Nathan Wardle's low cross from the

right and Wain forced the ball over the line to give South Hobart an unbeatable 11 points and a place in the final.

Two goals by Dwayne Walsh, who almost signed for Heidelberg last season, gave Clarence their win over the Lions.

His first came from a through-ball just before the interval, while his second,

shortly after the interval, was from a brilliant free-kick from 25 metres.

He expertly clipped the ball over the wall and it appeared to be flying over the bar before suddenly dipping into the net off the underside of the crossbar. It may pay Heidelberg to have another look at this 18 year-old, who pulled out of signing for them at the last minute.

Goalkeeper Nathan Pitchford, who also tried his luck in Victoria at the beginning of last season, scored the 16th penalty of the shoot-out against Knights to give Eagles a 5-4 win and the bonus point. But, it wasn't enough to give them a place in what would have been their third consecutive final, and coach Ian Parker's fourth final in a row.

Pitchford also saved three penalties - from Sacha Puclin, Janko Begovic and Martin Cairns.

Alexander Leszczynski, Adam McKeown, Jamie Vernon, Ben Whitehall and Pitchford were successful for Eagles, while Wade Savage and Adamu Koroma shot wide and Andrew Clark had his spot-kick saved by Ben Peter.

For the Knights, Tom Huigsloot, Jade Clay, Anthony Grundy and Nathan Daniels netted, while Peter's effort hit the outside of the left-hand post.



FOOTBALL FEDERATION
TASMANIA

By Walter Pless

Photos by Walter Pless

A little bit of this, that & the other...

ON THE BOX

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Tues Mar 18	Birmingham v Newcastle	6.55 am	Fox Sports 2
Thurs Mar 20	Tottenham v Chelsea	6.55 am	Fox Sports 1
Thurs Mar 20	Manchester United v Bolton	6.55 am	Fox Sports 2
Sat Mar 22	Tottenham v Portsmouth	11.40 pm	Fox Sports 1
Sun Mar 23	Blackburn v Wigan	1.55 am	Fox Sports 1
Sun Mar 23	Bolton v Manchester City	1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 23	Middlesbrough v Derby	1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 23	Newcastle v Fulham	1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 23	Reading v Birmingham	1.55 am	(Viewers Choice)
Sun Mar 23	Everton v West Ham	4.10 am	Fox Sports 1
Mon Mar 24	Manchester United v Liverpool	12.25 am	Fox Sports 1
Mon Mar 24	Chelsea v Arsenal	2.55 am	Fox Sports 1

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Wed Mar 19	Adelaide v Changchun	8.00 pm	Fox Sports 1
Wed Mar 19	Chonburi v Melbourne	10.00 pm	Fox Sports 1 (DELAY)

COCA-COLA CHAMPIONSHIP

Sat Mar 22	Charlton v West Brom	3.30 am	Fox Sports 2
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INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

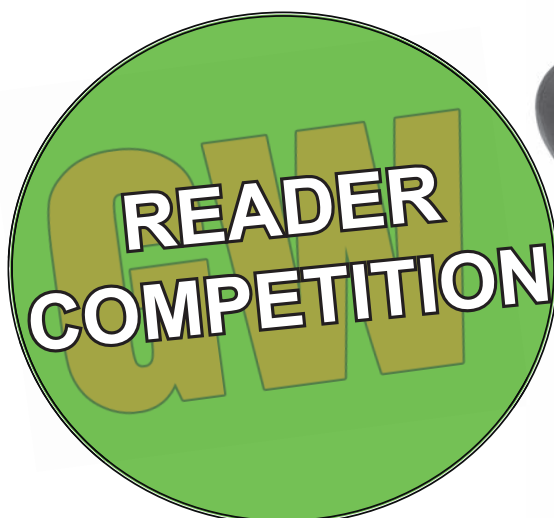
Sat Mar 22	Singapore v Australia	10.00 pm	Fox Sports 3
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TOTAL FOOTBALL

Thurs Mar 20	7.30 pm	Fox Sports 3
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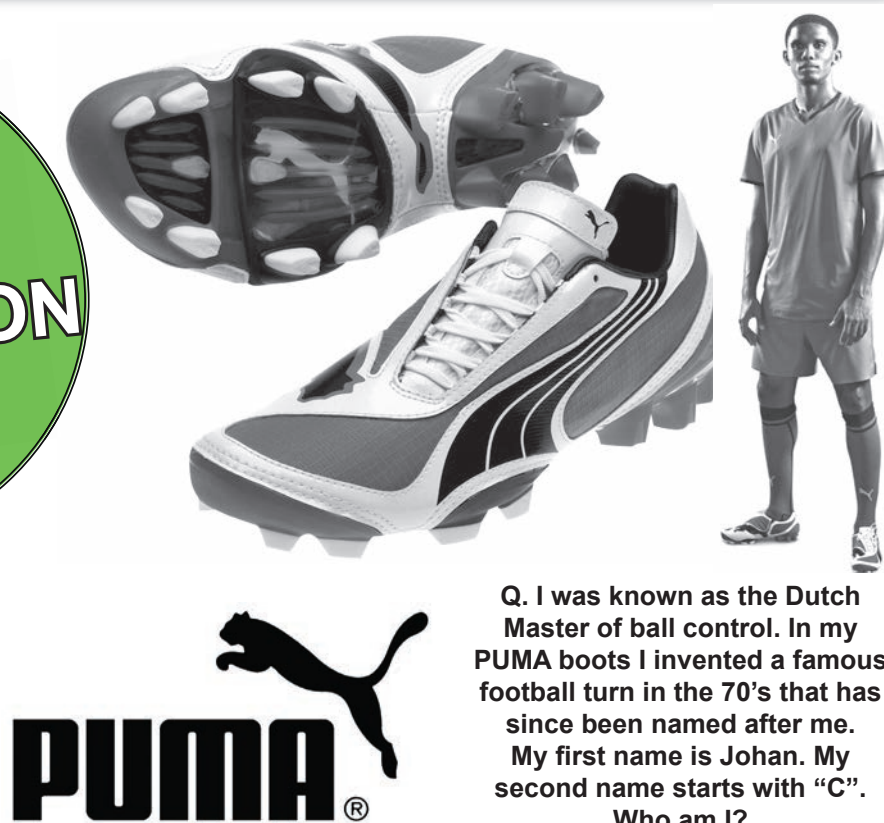


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Q. I was known as the Dutch Master of ball control. In my PUMA boots I invented a famous football turn in the 70's that has since been named after me. My first name is Johan. My second name starts with "C". Who am I?

WHO AM I? PUMA KINGS

? ? ? ?

1. Rated by many to be the greatest footballer of all time I famously wore my PUMA boots in the 1970 World Cup Final. I scored the opening goal of the game and then made assists on Jairzinho's and Carlos Alberto's goals, the latter one after an impressive collective play. Brazil won the match 4-1, keeping the Jules Rimet Trophy indefinitely. Burgnich, who marked me during the match, was quoted saying "I told myself before the game, he's made of skin and bones just like everyone else — but I was wrong". Who am I?

2. I was born October 30, 1960 and am a former Argentine football player. I played in four World Cups and received the people's choice FIFA Player of the Century award, after being voted in 2000 in an international public poll on the organisation's website to decide the best player of the 20th century. I won many trophies with Boca Juniors, FC Barcelona and SSC Napoli over the course of my career and during my international career I won 91 caps and scored 34 goals. My most memorable goal in a pair of PUMA boots came against England in the quarter-finals of the Mexico World Cup '86 tournament -- a spectacular 60-metre weave through six England players -- which is commonly referred to as "The Goal of the Century." Who am I?

3. I am among the top teams in international football and the second most successful national team

having won four World Cups (1934, 1938, 1982, 2006), just one fewer than Brazil. To this tally you can add one European championship (1968), two Central European International Cup and one Olympic Gold Medal (1936). The traditional colour of the national team is azure blue (azzurro, in Italian), and therefore national team members are nicknamed Azzurri. In June we'll be sporting our new PUMA tops at the European Championships in Switzerland and Austria. Who am I?

4. I was born 30 January 1981 in Macclesfield, Cheshire and am an English international football player. I currently play for the English club Liverpool as a striker. In my PUMA boots I have a height of 6 ft 7 in (2.01 m) which makes me the tallest man ever to play for either Liverpool or the England national team, as well as the tallest player currently in the Premier League. Who am I?

5. I started my career in Australia with Melbourne Knights in 1993, and became an Australian international in June of the following year. In my two seasons with the Melbourne Knights I was top goal scorer in the NSL and was twice awarded the Johnny Warren Medal for NSL Player of the Year in 1993/94 and 1994/95. I also won an NSL title in season 1994/1995. My PUMA boots bagged goals for Dinamo Zagreb, Celtic, Leeds United and currently, Newcastle United. Who am I?



This suave lot know exactly how to dress for success. The photo might help with the answer to question 3

6. I was born March 14, 1979 in Versailles, France and play as a striker. My PUMA boots helped me win the 1998-99 PFA Young Player of the Year award and make me a name at Arsenal. I've since changed clubs several times playing for eight teams in scarcely more than ten years, earning myself the nickname "Le Sulk" in the process. I now play for Chelsea in the EPL after signing from Bolton Wanderers for a reported £15 million in January 2008. As a result, I became the most expensive player in football history having commanded more than 85 million GBP in transfer fees. Who am I?

Answers

1. Pele, 2. Maradona, 3. Italy, 4. Peter Crouch, 5. Mark Viduka, 6. Nicholas Anelka

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END OF AN ERA AT GULLY

Brandon to head to greener pastures?

One noticeable name missing from the Green Gully line-up in this year's Foxtel Cup has been none other than Brandon Vassallo.

The highly regarded midfielder/forward who has played in no less than four championship winning sides and featured in a Minor Premiership, decided prior to the commencement of the current campaign to call it a day.

At a relatively young age of 29 and after nearly 10 ½ seasons sporting the green and white colours of Victorian powerhouse, Green Gully Cavaliers, with distinction, the news came as a surprise to most in the local football world.

Not least of all, Green Gully president, Charlie Farrugia, who was sorry to see him go and would have him back in a minute. But, such is the respect between club and player, the decision was accepted, and an association that stems back two generations came to a reluctant close.

Brandon's father is of course, Willie Vassallo, a former Maltese international who also gave sterling service to Green Gully and the Sunshine Georgies during the 70's and 80's.

"Like father, like son" so the saying goes, and Vassallo Snr also played his part in contributing to Gully's impressive honours list as an instrumental member of the side that secured a hat-trick of championships in 1981/82/83 and wrote his way into Gully folklore.

Such is the standing of the Vassallo family to the Green Gully Football Club, Farrugia was quick to point out that in the seven VPL championships the club has won, the Vassallo's have been a part of each and every one of them – more than doing their bit on the field to deliver a unique achievement in Victorian football.

Farrugia has nothing but admiration for Brandon saying, "We are very grateful for the service that Brandon has given to Green Gully over the years. Also, because his father played here during the championship years of the 80's, we feel very proud that they have contributed

so much to the success of Green Gully.

I've nothing but praise and respect for the family. Brandon was a very determined young man and didn't just give 100%, but he gave much more. He wanted to achieve things, he always strove hard to be in the first team and to his credit, managed to reach the pinnacle of what a player can reach in football in Victoria with Green Gully."

Farrugia went on to add, "Brandon would often stay back after training with Simon Storey and Jeff Fleming and work on extra things on the pitch after everyone else had made their way to the showers. Whether it was crosses, shooting, corners – he was one of those leaders who was quite committed. I wish he was still here, I wish he was still living in St Albans which would make it easier for him to get to the club, and I wish he still had that hunger."

Asked why Brandon made the decision he did, he replied "I more or less wanted to take some time out for myself. I think it's because I've been with the one club for so long and I've become a bit stale with the same routine at the one place. The other thing is I've just been married as well, to Linda, and we've moved to the other side of town to Mitcham. I suppose with travel and trying to fit in four, or sometimes even five sessions a week, it just didn't suit my life anymore and I guess some of my priorities have changed."

When asked if he's officially retired, Brandon set the record straight, "I'm not calling it a retirement, but rather just taking out a bit of a break from the game."

A gym and a treadmill in the front room in the new house indicates we may not have seen the last of him just yet. And a return to action in the Foxtel Cup may not be off the agenda entirely. "But, like I said, if a change occurred, I think I'd really take to it a bit more."

Based on those comments, it appears that the career which begun at North Sunshine before moving to George Cross, and spent nearly three years under



Four-time VPL championship winner, Brandon Vassallo, has decided to call it a day at Gully after ten years of service.

Ernie Merrick at the VIS, as well as a brief time with the Melbourne Knights in the NSL, isn't necessarily a forgone conclusion.

When speaking to Brandon, a sense of appreciation is obvious when asked to reveal his thoughts of his time at Green Gully Reserve, "I've been very lucky to be a part of such a professional set-up. I mean, the amount of good players that came through those championship years, like Adrian Cervinski, Zoran Markovski, Dragi Nastevski – who played for Australia, Dean Fak – who played I don't know how many games in the NSL, Roddy Vargas, Andy Vargas, Lubo Lapsansky, Simon Storey, Joey Rajher, Nick Tsaltas, the list goes on and on – the team that we had was very strong for those years. Those were years the club was fortunate to get these players together and when you've got a good people manager like Ian Dobson, it just felt like no one was ever going to beat us. It felt really good to have that frame of mind."

Asked about the highlight of his time with Green Gully, Brandon pointed to the VPL Grand Final triumph over Heidelberg United in 2005. Vassallo capped off Gully's 50th Jubilee Year Anniversary by scoring the first goal in the final at Olympic Park, on the way to a 2-0 win.

Was it a hard decision to make? "Yep, absolutely, I've been really fortunate

to be involved with one of the best run clubs in Victoria and I've been able to contribute to the success of the club. I didn't come to the decision straight away."

Brandon was slightly hesitant to fully commit to pre-season and after a heart to heart talk with Dobson, Vassallo was given a month off to "think about it".

Vassallo soon returned, but after a few further sessions it was obvious to him his original decision was probably the best for both parties.

The final announcement was ironically made at Sunshine Georgie's ground prior to a pre-season friendly match against current champions, Preston Lions. A brief speech to players and officials in the dressing rooms brought an end to one of the longest, most successful and unique sporting relationships witnessed in Victoria.

Asked whether or not he'd consider pulling on the boots again if approached by another club, Brandon replied, "Definitely".

Although the Vassallo/Gully connection may well have come to a close for now, one gets the impression we perhaps haven't seen the final chapter of this family's football exploits just yet.



Green Gully celebrated its 50th Anniversary in style by capturing the 2005 VPL Championship with a 2-0 win against Heidelberg United in the Grand Final. Vassallo opened the scoring that day as Gully marched towards its seventh title.

By James Taylor

Photos by John Punshon

TARTAN TALK with Nic Townsend

FA CUP UPSETS AND REPERCUSSIONS FOR EUROPE

This season's FA Cup looks to be the most exciting and open in years with all of the big four (Chelsea, Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool) knocked out.

More remarkable still is that Portsmouth are the only Premiership club still in the competition with the other three coming from the Championship.

Portsmouth are obviously favourites to win the cup from here but it is by no means certain. Despite the fact Barnsley currently sit firmly in the lower half of the Championship table, they have managed to knock out both Chelsea and Liverpool so they're unlikely to be intimidated by Pompey.

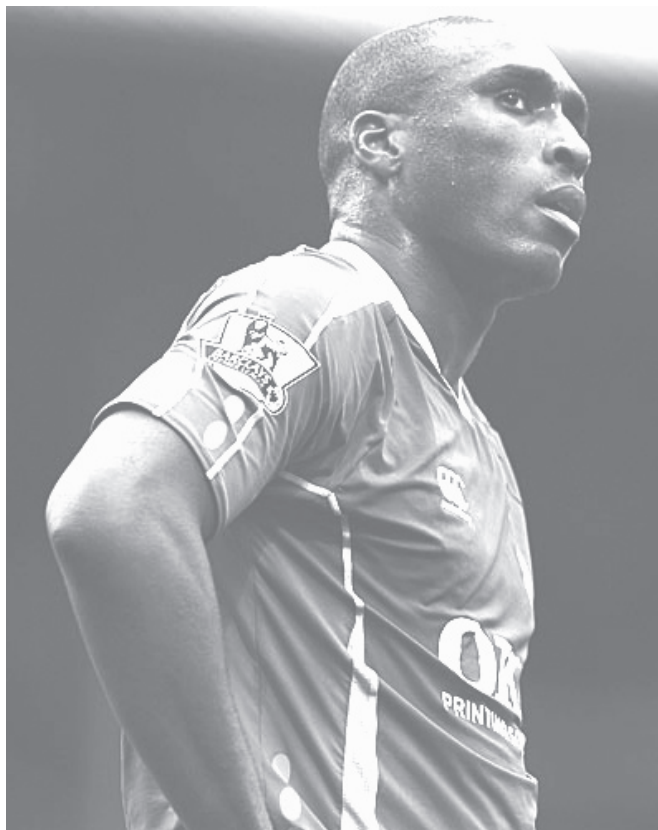
Cardiff has also been unimpressive this season but again can boast a Premier League scalp in Middlesbrough. West Bromwich haven't meet any EPL sides in their cup run so far, but they are generally regarded as one of the best teams outside of the top tier. They've made it to the semi finals with ease so far having scored 10 goals in the past two FA Cup fixtures.

The FA Cup upsets have also intensified the competition for European qualification in the Premiership. The EPL are allocated three UEFA Cup spots in addition to their four Champions League spots. Two of those spots go to the winner of the League Cup and FA Cup.

Seeing as the winners of those two cups in recent years have usually been the same teams that have already claimed a Champions League spot, the UEFA Cup spots often got passed onto the teams finishing 6th

and 7th on the table.

However as Tottenham have already won the League Cup and the FA Cup will go to a club not in the top four, it looks like only the club finishing 5th will go to Europe. At the time of writing both Everton and Liverpool have a seven-point gap ahead of 6th. Aston Villa, Manchester City, Blackburn and Portsmouth (if they don't win the FA Cup) will be reduced to scrambling over a place in the Intertoto Cup if they hope to play in Europe next season.



Pompey and Soul: Sol Campbell could possibly steer Portsmouth to its first FA Cup since 1939.

GRETNA

This week Scottish side Gretna provided all football fans a warning on the consequences of relying on wealthy benefactors for success.

The club has gone into administration and looks unlikely to survive beyond the end of the season. At the time of writing Gretna were about to kick off

against Aberdeen. Right up until last Thursday this game looked unlikely to go ahead as the club only had 10 players prepared to take the field.

The only reason Gretna play in the SPL today is because millionaire businessman Brooks Milesen has bankrolled a complete facelift of the club. In 2002 Gretna were playing in the English county leagues.

A shift to the Scottish League, a huge injection of funds and three successive promotions later, Gretna find themselves in the top tier and completely out of their depth. Until this season they were paying the highest wages outside of the SPL, but with only a modest fan base the club have been operating at huge losses. This was never problem as long as Milesen was prepared to foot the bill.

However as Milesen's health has increasingly deteriorated the club has lost its cash cow. Milesen has since said he can no longer finance the club as he continues to battle poor health. The players' wages have gone unpaid and the club have seen an exodus of personnel. Seeing as non-payment of wages is a breach of contract, the few remaining players on Gretna's books are entitled to leave immediately.

Gretna have been reduced to making up the numbers in their first-team with players from the Under 19s squad. All of a sudden a club with the finances, fan base and infrastructure of an amateur team are stuck in a professional league with the corresponding costs with seemingly no possible way of paying up.

The question now is can Gretna survive until the end of the season? If they go out of business before playing their remaining nine games, no team will be relegated from the SPL this year. All points from games involving Gretna will



For how much longer can little Gretna keeps its doors open?

consequently be cancelled.

Dundee United will be the biggest benefactor from this having lost to Gretna twice. Gretna's only hope now is that the SPL will grant them an advance on end-of-season takings, and for a large gate receipt from their next home game against Celtic.

In an age where every fan now hopes for a wealthy benefactor to buy up their club and buy success, Gretna's recent experience shows the folly and unsustainability of such plans. The success might be great in the short term, but if the club isn't self-sufficient, what will they do when the cash flow suddenly stops? What would happen to Chelsea if Roman Abramovich suddenly got bored?

Gretna fans may thank Brooks Milesen for giving their modest club the chance to play in the Scottish Cup, UEFA Cup and Scottish Premier League, but his reckless spending has also potentially destroyed the club in the process.



Gossip and Transfer Speculation from the English Media...

England's 'big four' clubs will have a key role in the battle to stay in the Premier League as they juggle their domestic and Champions League commitments, according to Reading manager Steve Coppell.

Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool - who've been paired together - have all qualified for the quarter-finals of European club football's most prestigious competition.

That leaves them contemplating resting players for matches against opponents at the foot of the table so as to keep their stars fresh for Europe.

Frank Lampard will sign a new Chelsea contract, the club's chief executive Peter Kenyon said Friday.

Kenyon also played down reports manager Avram Grant would be sacked at the end of the season if the London club failed to win either the Premier League or Champions League titles.

England midfielder Lampard has criticised what he said was Chelsea's delay in handing him a new deal but Kenyon, speaking at the Champions League quarter-final and semi-final draw at UEFA headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, told Sky Sports: "The discussions that we'll have with Frank will be kept private and that's important."

"Both parties have made it absolutely clear we want to find a resolution."

Liverpool defender Daniel Agger is likely to be sidelined for the remainder of the season with a foot injury, Reds manager Rafael Benitez said Friday.

The 23-year-old Denmark international has been out of action since September with a metatarsal injury and is due to have an operation next week.

"It's a blow for Daniel but we want to get his problem sorted," Benitez told the club's official website, www.liverpoolfc.tv.

"We have defensive cover and Martin Skrtel is playing very well. Daniel will be back for next season."

Slovakian Skrtel replaced Agger as the most expensive defender in Liverpool's history following his six million pounds transfer from Zenit St Petersburg in January

Champions League Draw

Quarter-finals

Arsenal (ENG) v Liverpool (ENG)
AS Roma (ITA) v Manchester United (ENG)
Schalke 04 (GER) v Barcelona (ESP)
Fenerbahce (TUR) v Chelsea (ENG)

Semi-finals

Arsenal (ENG)/Liverpool (ENG) v Fenerbahce (TUR)/Chelsea (ENG)
Schalke 04 (GER)/Barcelona (ESP) v AS Roma (ITA)/Manchester United (ENG)

Quarter-finals - first leg on April 1-2 and return leg on April 8-9

Semi-finals - April 22/23 and April 29/30

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